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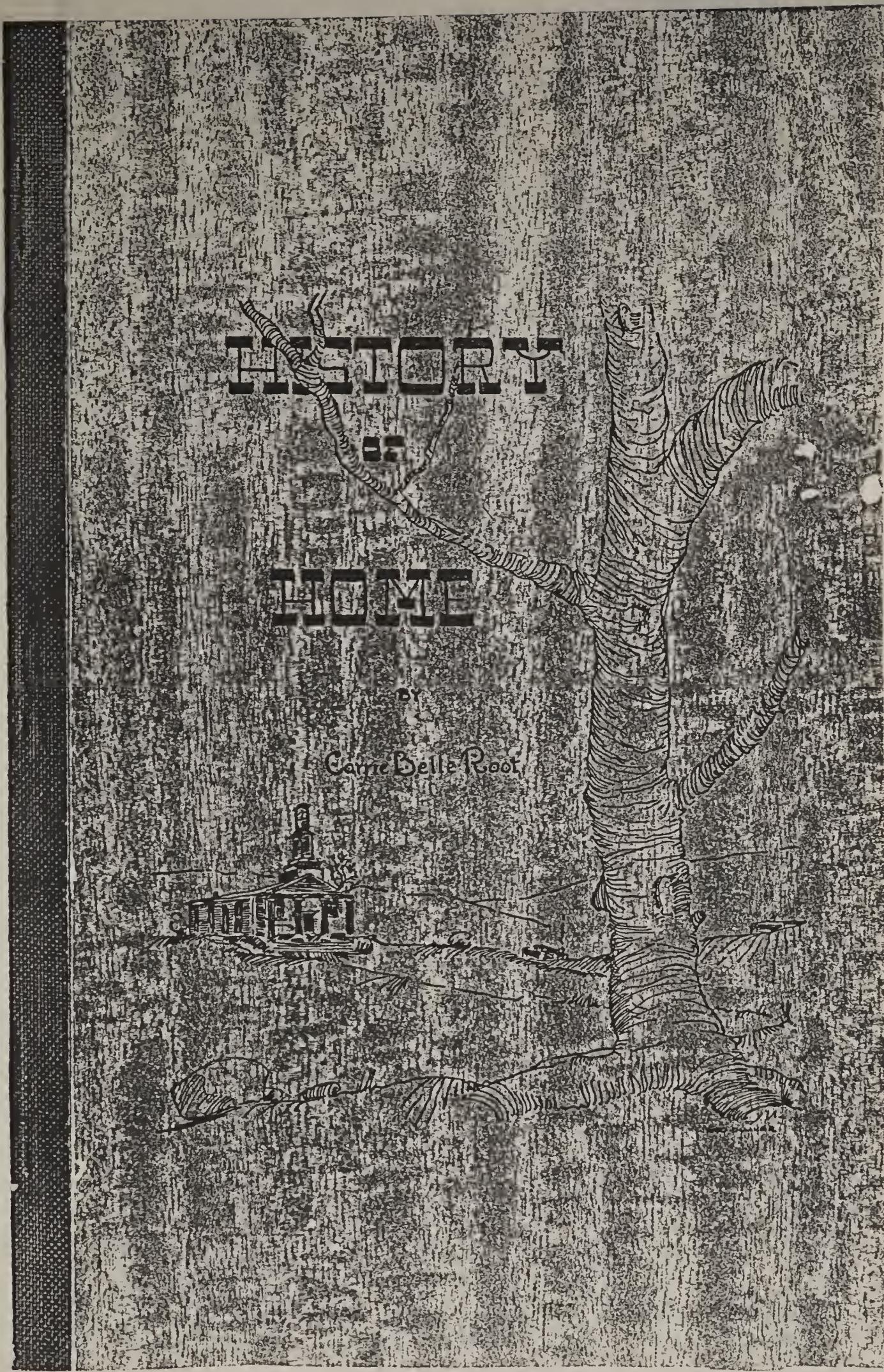
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ROOT, CARRIE BELLE.
HISTORY OF HOME, WHICH IS
PORT BYRON, NEW YORK,
U. S. A.

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History of Home

which is

Port Byron, New York

U. S. A.

June, 1948

Allen County PUBLIC LIBRARY
Ft. Wayne, Indiana

Dear Readers:

Completion of this chronicle would have been impossible without help from many sources.

Dr. Gilbert, Addie Warren, Irvin Davis, Marie Van-Ditto, Marie Wentzel, George Perkins, Ev Kerns and many others generously supplied documents and factual material.

The story telling genius of Hull Main, Dr. Stone, Mrs. Ed Elliott, Vesta Ferguson, the late Jennie Ward, and the elders of Port Byron supplied the wealth of incident without which history is deadly dull.

Advice and criticism by Vera Fenn, and Washington poets, George Goldberg and Isabelle Wright, improved form and continuity:-

But without the energetic business management and practical suggestions of Marjorie Jacobs Banks the whole enterprize would have been impossible.

To these and to the entire community which, like Dick King and Mr. Gates cooperated, thank you -- this is your story.

Carrie Belle Root

FOREWORD

History has been defined as "The recorded pilgrimage of the soul of man as expressed by his words and deeds. Its material is limitless." Though the field of this record is limited to our small village, its appeal to our interest is perhaps greater than those of wider scope.

The pilgrimage which is here reviewed has been fortunate in its compilers, George Sibley Corfield, who has had much experience in research and collecting material for his own articles and books on geography; and Carrie Belle Root, who has been gifted to look at the past with poetic vision and to execute with a sure touch pictures of the onward sweep of growth the years have brought to our home town. To them, and to Marjorie Banks, organizer, business manager, and to many others who have aided in various degrees, the Alumni Association of the Port Byron School wishes to express gratitude and appreciation.

VERA B. FENN

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History of Home

Part I — Beginnings

This is our town, it is our nation, too;
For history weaves intricate designs
From which it is impossible to draw
A single thread and say, "This is a fact
Beyond dispute." You may have cause to doubt;
Agreed, this picture is inadequate
And yet the story told is living truth;
Story of vision, of conception, growth,
Of men who dared and won, while others failed
To write important chapters of their own.
Look at them all, for none can stand alone
Against the test of Time, the Final Judge.

The Indians, before the white man came
Knew the deep valleys of the Finger Lakes
As a rich hunting ground the gods had blessed
With bountiful supply of fruits and game.
The Drumlins were more than a deep moraine
Left by a glacier covering the land
For untold ages. They were soaring hills
In whose bright glades the hardy maize would grow,
And in whose rivers swam the speckled trout,
And through whose forests roamed the bear and deer.
On crested hills the council fires were built,
And smoke, ascending, brought the Peace Gods near.

The mighty Iroquois had lived in peace,
Six tribes united for the common good,

Until dissension by encroaching French
And English split the solemn council house.
The Senecas took up the bow for one,
And Mohawk hatchets served the other side.
So was that ancient league dissolved in blood,
And white men seized the country both would guard.

The tragedy was of a passing race,
No longer strong enough to have and hold
A vital land. This conquest cleared the way,
And a new race of sturdy pioneers
Settled the valleys and began to build.

The first white men to walk Cayuga trails
Shall be forever nameless, for they were
Surveyors, trappers, men far from their kin,
Whose cabins quickly fell into decay, —
Land must be cleared, crops must be sown in spring,
A house be built, a family settled there,
For wilderness to blossom into home.
And so, though Bucks and Kings were not the first
To see the beautiful Owasco flow,
Theirs are the names that are remembered now.

The lazy Seneca sedately glides
Along the border of the higher lands.
It meets Oneida's westward rolling stream
Forming the swift Oswego which turns north
To Lake Ontario. These streams were known
As the great river gateway to the West
Along which hardy river men could pole
Their batteaux loaded deep with household goods.
Their seed, keen axes, iron and a forge.
Each summer these flotillas carried west
New, hopeful pioneers who drove ahead
Into the wilderness. They hoped to find
More opportunities than they would have
In staid New England or the old Dutch towns.

This might have been the route that Philip King
Selected, but instead he came on foot,
Pack burdened, through the narrow Mohawk gorge,
And west along the old Five Nations Trail!
From Hudson Valley, where his home had been,
To settle in the Military Tract
And build a homestead on his soldier's claim.
The site he chose was on a rounded hill
West of Owasco Outlet. There he built
A cabin where Ezkiel King was born.
The first white child! The settlement had grown.
For other men from Saratoga came
Following Philip King and his brave wife.
Young Seba Higley, Partridge, and Charles Ames
Were given tracts of land by Mr. King.
Descendants of these men have played their parts
In local history to the present time.

Had 'Lijah Buck first seen his promised land
When he, like King and Higly, had a part
In Sullivan's long Indian Campaign?
After the mighty chieftain, Logan, fell—
Defeated in the battle of Chemung.
The forest rangers under Sullivan
Had split into small parties and explored
Much of the land the Iroquois controlled.
It may have been the Bucks had traveled north
Along Owasco Outlet and observed
The richness and the promise of the land
Where stands the town that later bore their name.
Elijah Buck and Aholiab came
To claim the land a grateful country gave
As bounty to the men who risked their lives
To give her independence from a crown
Worn by a king her people did not love.

As Philip King chose westward looking hills
So Buck, preferred the sheltered valley lands

And staked his claim astride the master stream.
His reason may have been the salt lick there,
Or maybe he was dreaming of a mill
To grind the corn his farmer neighbors raised.

Before the turning of the century
A road was built, a single wagon track
Through timber land, rutted and stumpy; still
Along it men and beasts could find their way
Unhampered by low limbs and underbrush.
This trail was not the valley route now used.
It climbed across the shoulders of the hills,
Leaving Weed's Basin, winding toward the west,
It forded Cold Creek south of Centerport,
Where it runs shallow over gravel flats;
Then wandered up the hills that overlook
The village, and at last plunged steeply down
Into Owasco's valley and the town.
The isolation of the frontier then
Was less complete. Scarcely a week would pass
Without some travelers upon the trail,
Driving their ox-drawn sledges east to mill
With corn and wheat, or, dragging home the flour
The women leavened into bread and pones
And baked in chimney ovens. Others rode
Westward to Montezuma after salt
Evaporated from the brine springs there.
(This thriving trade already had a start
Before the Bucksville settlement was made.)

In 1800 Aaron Knapp arrived.
Buck gave the miller land and water rights,
Provided he would build the town a mill
To grind the grain and saw the winter's logs.
Such an industrial grouping may seem strange,
But saws for spring and mill-stones for the fall
Were a wise combination in a land

Where every family raised its own supply
Of grain, and cleared fresh land to plant each spring.
The business thrived and Aaron Knapp stayed on
Until he died in 1825.

Part II — Early 1800's Pattern For A Century

During those years while Aaron Knapp ground grain,
The pattern of a century was set
In local as in national affairs,
Expansion, new inventions, war and wealth
Boom time and panic were reflected here.

When Philip King came through the westward trail
He brought the Bible with him for he knew
That children in the wilderness need God.
He taught his boys to read the Christian word.
Before the good John Seymour came to preach,
They learned the Baptist hymns and sang the psalms
And sometimes went to Sunday services
In Auburn, where a circuit rider preached.

Another early grant was homesteaded
At Conquest where James Perkins and his sons,
Ira and Gilbert, Jeremiah, John,
Established a new town in 1802.

The Auburn-Conquest trail ran north and south
Along the east bank of Owasco Creek,
Fording the Seneca by the long bar
Of gravel later named "Mosquito Point."
For this trail Bucksville was the halfway stop.

These settlements, the aftermath of war,
Grew rapidly in the decade of peace;
But rumblings of "Impressment" roused the States
To arm again and prove their unity,
Their rights to trade and freedom of the sea.

Men of the Revolution reared their sons
To love of God and love of country, too;
So when war came again in 1812
Young Richard King signed eagerly to go.
John Perkins from the Conquest settlement
Enlisted too, and won a captain's bars.
Both men returned, loving their hills the more
For having seen the mountains and the sea.

No battles raged among the Finger Lakes.
Only the men who marched away to war
Saw from afar the loot of Washington,
And told the terror of the burning town.
Old Seba Higly, listening, recalled
The coming of the Tories and Burgoyne,
How, with his family hidden in the woods,
He matched his musket against English guns.
He said, "We are at one with Maryland,
Defending soil we love. Fight well, my sons."

All praised courageous Dolly Madison
Because she saved the country's treasures first,
And left her own behind in Washington.

They heard the guns with Key at Baltimore,
And cheered the victory flag of which he sang,
Until the quiet northern woodlands rang;—

"The Star Spangled Banner,
Oh, long may it wave
O'er the land of the free
And the home of the brave."

Some rode to Sacket's Harbor where a sloop
Was building to defend Ontario.
(Today it lies half-finished on the ways
Abandoned when the cryptic message came
That Perry, on Lake Erie had destroyed
The English Fleet and crushed invasion there.)
That victory freed the northern land from fear.

Soldiers returned to farm, to store, to mill.
And Bucksville knew its future was secure.

Thus, suddenly, the frontier days were gone,
And the adventurer paused for the night,
Then pressed on westward seeking newer lands.

As linen warp strung on the loom of life
Are certain family threads which follow through
Determining the strength, the length, the breadth
Of the rich fabric history shall weave.
Upon this warp the patterned woof is spun
From changing factors, transients passing through.
Their strands may weave across the fabric once
Before they travel on to distant scenes.
They leave a splash of brilliant color here.
Some threads, more tenuous and stongly spun
Will follow through the pattern to the end,
Forming the even groundwork of the cloth
Which history weaves in varying design.

A stage road was complete to Albany
Along which horse drawn coaches could proceed
At what, for those days, was a breakneck pace.
Anticipating travelers and their needs,
King built upon his hill the square old house
That stands today, its weathered body strong
With hand-hewn oaken beams and thick board floors.
Huge fireplaces that heated every room
Are plastered over now, but chimneys stand
Defying modern furnaces and oil.
The windows, bright with fine clear panes of glass,
Were unlike cabin shutters of the day.
It still is guardian of the western road.
That western road continued many miles
And joined the Girdled Road to Cleveland.
King's Tavern marked the journey half complete
From Albany to such Lake Erie towns

As Buffalo and Dunkirk, from which ships,
Full rigged, deep laden, beautiful, could sail
Past old Fort Dearborne, through Lake Michigan,
Down to Chicago, gateway to the west.

Though many traveled on, still, others stayed.
Hiram VanVechten, who was journeying
From Pennsylvania, saw that Bucksville was
Without a doctor, so he settled there
And carried healing herbs across the hills.
Thus charlatans and mid-wives were replaced
By a trained medic who would dare to scoff
At strange horse-chestnut charms, and mouse-ear oil.
This great new era of expansion brought
The state surveyors up the busy road.
They sought to build an empire and a dream
By tying Erie and the high fresh lakes
Fast to the Hudson River and the sea,
With a canal, the longest in the world.
Locks would be built through which a boat might climb
Across the hills where rivers never flowed
And float three hundred feet up from the sea.
The town of Bucksville saw the dream come true
At last, with Clinton's Ditch dug deep and straight
Across the center of the town and state.

By 1820 the tow boats could go
From Utica west to the Seneca
At Montezuma where the Clark house stood
Upon a hill that overlooked the marsh
And salt works around which that village grew.
"Clark House," to us of modern days became
A house of legend whose deep cellars hid
Records of mystery, of intrigue and fear;
For "Clark House" was a favorite hiding place,
Used by the abolitionists who helped
The blacks. Escaped from slavery, negroes were
Brought north across free states to Canada.

There they were men with souls, not property
Of other men no better than themselves.
Along with commerce this strange traffic grew
Through all the north. — The tempo of the times
Was reckless.

The canal brought immigrants
With blarney on their tongues. Strange Irish songs,
Customs, and faces changed the quiet town.
The ragged driver boys who trudged along,
Lugging the whiffletrees behind their teams
Of scrawny horses, came from hardy stock
Or they could not have scuffed the toe-path dust
From Albany to Buffalo and back.
Starting in early spring, through August heat
And cold fall rains, they drove down the "Long Haul,"
Until the winter "freeze-up" stopped the trade.
Then barges went to dry-dock for repair,
And boatmen sought new work that they could do
In villages where tow-boats were tied up,
Or, bought a little farm and settled there.

New industries came with the new canal.
More mills sprang up along Owasco Creek.
Competing with the miller, Aaron Knapp,
Were Joseph Root whose brother Samuel
Came with him. These two built a small grist mill
But both, at heart, were men who loved the land --
So Samuel bought a farm. His grandson was
A soldier in the "War Between the States."
But Joseph followed up the long canal
To Tonawanda where he built anew
And where his great, great, grandsons live today.

In frontier days, when peddlers rode the trails,
Their meager packs held buttons, needles, pans—
Supplies much prized by women everywhere.

Such men were always welcomed in the homes
But they could not provide for growing needs.
So when, in 1815, Whitney came
And, with James Bennett, opened the first store,
Their business prospered: - as did Harrington,
The wagon maker and the blacksmith, Mead.
Still other shops and businesses were born,
Because the building of the new canal
Insured a route to market for their wares.

Part III — Boomtime Along Clinton's Big Ditch

Completion of the Grand Canal began
The golden era for the little towns
Along the right of way. Businesses grew
Like mushrooms: - and the price of land
Boomed with them. 1813 saw
More than three-hundred-thousand yards of cloth
Woven upon Cayuga County looms.
Distilleries and tanneries, hatters shops,
Asheries for making cakes of soap
More prized than was the soft soap leached at home
In every farmer's kettle, were already built.
Carding machines, a trip-hammer, and salt
Were among industrial adventures of the time.
In 1833 Port Byron contained
Beside the Beach's Mill, a copper shop
Run by the Dougherty's, nine dry-goods stores
Four taverns and a dry-dock, all of which
Were prosperous. The town had grown until
The census showed some fifteen hundred souls.

Before that settlement could boast a name
Two men from Auburn moved to Haydenville.
Their names were Clark and Casey. Though they cleared
A strip of land and built a lumber mill
Neither remained.

In 1820 Harry Rice began
A carding mill where wool was combed and spun.
But Rice and Clark and Casey paused only
A moment, for life patterns quickly change,
And for these families there were different plans.

Onto their wispy threads conditions spun
Another strand of woof which might be called
The Hayden Wool. The Hayden family came
In 1800 from Connecticut.

They settled first in Auburn where they lived
Until young William, three when they arrived,
Met Julia Botsford, who was born and raised
In Clarksville where her father kept the inn.
Will married her in 1817.

After a year or two this young man bought
The carding mill, first built by Mr. Rice,
And a pail factory, also run by power
Supplied from waters of Owasco Creek.
In these two buildings he installed the best
Machinery for producing woolen cloth.
He bought a spinning jenny that could make
Ten threads while an old wheel was spinning one;
And modified his tools for shearing sheep
To work by water power as did the mill.
From early spring until the frosts of fall,
The farmers drove their sheep into the stream
And washed the bleating pelts upon the hoof,
Then hazed them to the factory clipping pens.
Five thousand woolies in the creek at once
Turned all the lower stream to churning mud
But spinning jennys sang, and looms were fed.
This business, prosperous for many years,
Employed some twenty men. They made the cloth
For convict uniforms, the "Hayden Gray"
As well as fabrics for free men to wear.
Hardy Merinos furnished the gray cloth

From which was fashioned Greeley's famous coat
That, after fifteen years, was good as new
When stolen. In the heat of House debate
Our representative removed his cloak
And left it in the chamber's ante-room.
"My favorite coat," sighed Greeley, "and it was
Not worn at all for it was Hayden's weave."

Part IV — Local Celebrities

At one time Brigham Young worked in this mill
And lived in Haydenville, before he moved
Into the larger viilage of Port Byron.
Employed as painter on such famous homes
As the Seward Mansion, or on dry-docked boats,
He earned a meager living at his trade.

In 1832 Young joined the faith
Of Joseph Smith. They led the Mormons west
To Salt Lake City. Other famous men
Like Henry Wells, later of Wells and Fargo,
Lived and worked in the ambitious town
That grew and prospered by the "Grand Canal."

In 1830 Parson Shipley Wells
Preached in Port Byron and his son, Henry, worked
As a shoe maker. Here he made new plans
For swift communication. First he was
A one man agency that dared transport
Papers and goods of value safely from
The East and Albany to Buffalo
By public carrier in record time.
From such beginnings the great system grew
Which serves the world today as "The Express."
For Henry Wells success was not enough;

He built the future with the wealth he gained,
By founding schools and colleges like Wells.
This woman's college at Aurora is
The only institution he endowed
Which still survives to honor Henry Wells.

Ambitious for success, Port Byron had hopes
Of growing rich and famous through "the trade."
For in the 1820's Bucksville was
The second largest toll point on "The Ditch."
Young Roderick Matson was collector there
And he, with Landon, owned a dry-goods store.
All merchandise for Auburn went by road
Up from "Byron's Wharf" where the canal boats docked
To unload passengers or take on freight.
Who Byron was nobody seems to know.
Apparently the strange "blue-water men,"
Come up from ocean sailing, dubbed the wharf
"Byron's Port." Others had read the songs of Byron,
The poet, so the students liked the name
The sailors gave. The influence of Buck
Was fading, too, for many thought that King
As the first settler, should have named the town.
Reason or surmise, 1832
Saw Bucksville called THE VILLAGE OF PORT BYRON
And the incorporation ever since
Has born the Christian name of a young man
Who scarcely paused in passing through the town.

In 1814 John H. Beach began
Erection of a cotton mill well up
The Outlet, near the Clarksville settlement.
This mill was sold in 1822
And Beach bought water rights above Port Byron
And land that bordered on the Grand Canal.
He built the largest flour mill in the state,
With twenty run of stone, a private dock,
And constant water power made certain by

A feeder two miles long. This mill could grind
Five hundred barrels of fine flour a day,
And probably employed some thirty men.
With Henry Kennedy of Rochester
As supervisor, this mill prospered well
Through almost twenty years. It was destroyed
In 1857 by a fire
Which, with the death of Kennedy, somehow
Changed the adventurous outlook of the town.

The horse drawn tow-boats fostered an idea
So S. B. Kendrick and Ezekiel King
Invested in five hundred head of stock
To rent canalers when their weary teams
Were lamed and weakened by the steady haul.
Drivers, as well, were often to be hired
For a day's travel up or down the "Ditch,"
While almost every haul from Albany
Brought in new immigrants, who worked their way
Until they found a place to call their home.

Part V — Founding of the Churches

Woven, along with threads of industry,
Into the early days of settlement
Were teachings of the Church and School in which
These frontier men were nurtured from their birth.
(Back in those days, religious teachings were
A part of every family's daily life.)
At "Evening Prayers" the little ones would learn
To say the verses from the family "Book,"
To spell out words of Peter or of Christ:-
But not all pioneers were literate,
For these were men of deeds rather than words,
And so two schools of sorts were organized
In 1800. Who the teachers were
Is not recorded, but one schoolhouse stood
West of the settlement on land now used

By Stephen Mills. In Nauvoo triangle
Another school was built which also served
As a town hall, and church, and could be used
As block house, though the need did not arise
Because the "Battle of the Lakes" was won
In 1814.

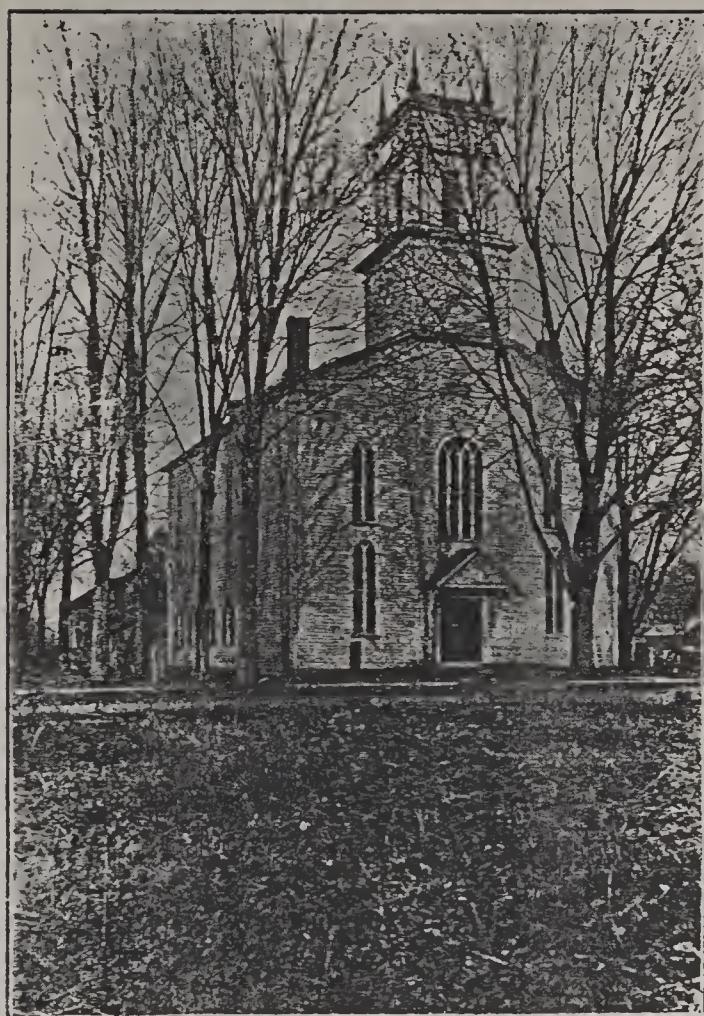


Presbyterian Church in Canal Days

Speaking of the Church,
An Elder Smith began in 1801,
Preaching the Congregationalist's Creed
To all who wished to hear the Word of God.

At first, beneath a friendly button tree,
He read to thirty-five new settlers,
Who offered thanks for harvests and for homes,
Some years slipped by before a formal church,
With steeple and a bell tower, housed this flock;
And when it did, the creed accepted was
The Presbyterian concept of the faith.
Dissension from the Dutch Reformers made
The first church which they built untenable.
Although the Presbyterians regained
The title, they could not be happy there.
Escaping memories, they wisely built
The Main Street church in 1843
And sold the older building to a group
Of Methodists who had no meeting house.
The Main Street house of worship serves us still,
Although it suffered damage when the fire
Of 1887 swept the town.
Simple and unassuming is "The Word."
It offers sanctuary to the world
From atom bombs or tangled social ills.

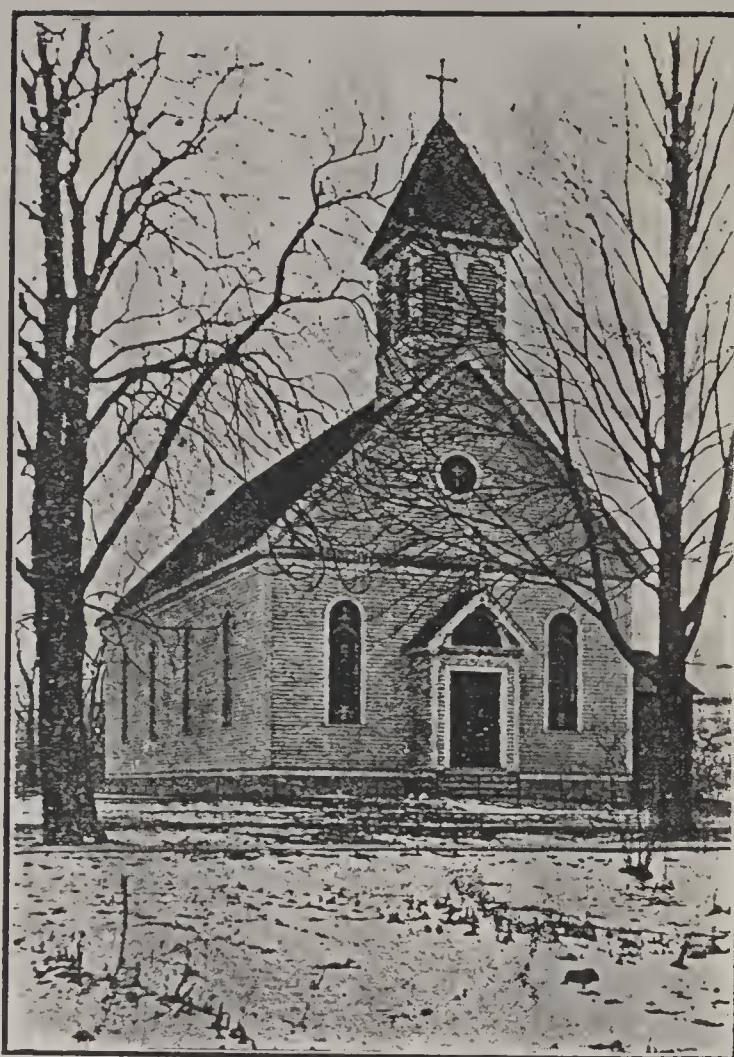
Although old Philip King was of that faith
A Baptist church was first established here
In 1820 when John Jeffries preached.
Then forty-eight good Baptists formed themselves
Into a separate congregation
In the fast growing town by the canal.
In 1834 they bought the land
And laid foundations for the red brick church
Which stands today. In those days creed was thought
So all important that division was
The custom of the people and the times,
For personal conviction was the law.



Methodist Church Before Remodeling

In 1801 the Methodists had heard
The good John Seymour, but no church was formed
In Bucksville. Until 1850 men
From the Cayuga Circuit preached in town
As missionaries and their converts were
Baptized and sanctified. At last a flock
Of size and wealth sufficient to afford
A building and a pastor of their own,
Purchased the building which had once been used
By Presbyterians before they moved

To Main Street. It has since served well.
James Nostrant, Kincade, Gilmore, Tanner, Kerns,
Were names affiliated then, as now,
With Methodism in the village here.



St. John's Catholic Church

The Irishmen who came up the canal
Demanded the Salvation of the Mass.
At first the mission priests from Rochester
Rode through and ministered to those who lived

In Montezuma, Weedsport, Conquest, Mentz,
And then a priest from Weedsport said the Mass
In homes of Catholics in Bucksville, too.
It was not until 1856
That a church building was appointed here
And regular hours for services confirmed.
The Port Byron Catholics have never been
An independent parish with a priest
Because, before Italian workers joined
The congregation, Montezuma bought
A parish house. The priest resided there.



Part VI — Gold and High Finance Formation of Social Clubs

The spirit of adventure did not die
When frontier days were but a memory.
For 1849 brought news of GOLD
And wonders seen in Californ-i-a.
The people heard, and hot young blood was thrilled
With wild desire for fortune and for fame.

Cayuga County Joint Stock Company
Was organized in Auburn and Port Byron:-
A vessel bought, the clipper Belvidere,
With cargo of beef, iron, boots and shoes,-
And lumber to be sold in "Frisco" when
The ship made port from sailing "Round the Horn."
Hard working farmers and their sons "Bought in"
And worked their passage through the Golden Gate
To disappointment; - for the cargo sold
At next to nothing. Eastern lumber built
Three houses: - one, the men themselves lived in.
The best was lost when title to the land
On which they built was proven fraudulent.
The third became a nondescript hotel
In which the home folks scarcely could feel pride.

Of those who sailed, not one discovered gold
In "them thar hills;" a few found other wealth
In trade and commerce. Most of them returned
Across the dusty plains to the green land
From which they had so eagerly set out
In search of fortune.

All the eastern states
They found fermented with a strange unrest
And disagreement; Mason-Dixon Lines
And the smooth compromises of Calhoun
And Clay could not subdue the rising tide
Of abolitionist and "Cession" talk.

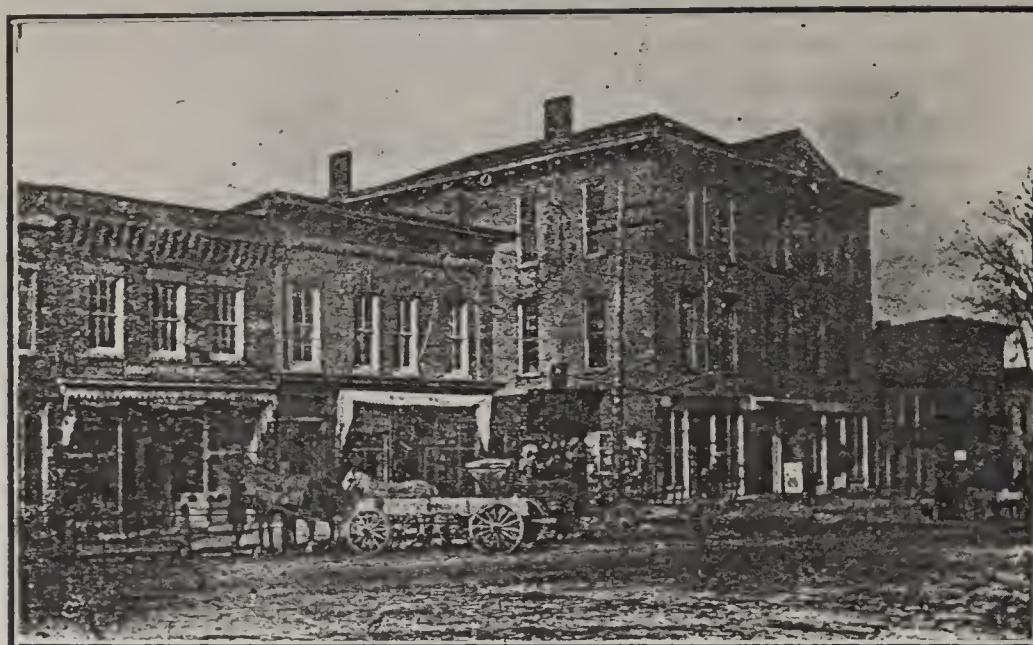
The unexciting labor of the land
Provided families with security
But dreams of sudden wealth were not confined
To search for gold. A thousand wild cat schemes
Lured honest dollars from the farmer's purse.
Scarcely a house but could be papered well
With gilt edged stocks and worthless mortgages
On paper mills and tanneries that failed,

Or branch canals for which there was no trade.
Still men like Isaac Singer were passed by
As shiftless tinkerers of little worth,
And Mr. Clark was thought a reckless fool
When he bought Singer's precious patent rights
On the lock stitch machine perfected here.
Once in production sewing machines were
True friends to every housewife in the land.
Clark made a fortune, while this man who had
Inventive genius lived in poverty.
Improvident, a dreamer, a great man,
Hail, Isaac Singer, Tinker of Port Byron!

Other inventions like the Osborne Plow
Or Kerbey Reaper were built locally
In Auburn. Farmers bought these fine machines,
But squandered what they earned farther afield
On ventures which showed less enduring worth
But made wild promises of sudden wealth.
Despite the constant drain that unsound schemes
And wild promotions made upon the purse
Of town and country, business man and farm,
The solid wealth of rich black earth remained,
The wealth of free men wedded to a land
Won by their fathers from the wilderness.

Prosperity makes time for social clubs.
The Freedom Lodge was first to organize
In 1820. Though the name was changed
In 1845, Masonic work
Has been uninterrupted in Port Byron.
The present charter for the lodge dates back
To 1848 when meetings were
Held in the Kendrick Block, (the building where
The H. C. Gutchess company is housed).
Through the enthusiasm of such men
As Dennis Robinson and Finley King

Construction of the brick Masonic Block
Was finished just before the Civil War.



Masonic Block

The pleasant lodge rooms have been wisely used
Throughout the years. Many a gala dance
Was played by favorite orchestras and bands;
There were home talent plays that filled the seats
With farmers and their families who drove in
From all directions to applaud their friends,
Hiss at the villain, cheer the heroine,
And thoroughly enjoy a night of fun.
The Port Byron lodge was known in many lands
Because its onetime master, Finley King,
Had charge of foreign correspondence in
The Grand Masonic Lodge for many years.
James Owen, Taylor, Seaman, Stevenson,
Were also active in the State Masonic work.

Much later Maccabees and Oddfellows
Had active chapters of those orders here.
At one time the Rebeccas had a group
Which offered willing aid to Oddfellows.
Although this lodge, through argument, gave up
Its charter, Oddfellows still meet
In their own rooms above Mecomber's shop.

Part VII — Republican Party Born

Men who had won their birthright from a crown
Through blood, and then assailed a wilderness
And conquered that, were men who dared to hold
Mighty convictions. They expressed their thoughts
On how both State and Nation should be ruled.
These Upstate men were solidly behind
Such governors as Morris, first to say,
"Lake Erie must be tapped" and carried east
To feed the Hudson River and New York.
Geddes was honored for his survey work;
While Jefferson, because he thought the plan
Impractical was "A weak president"
Unpopular, short sighted, named with scorn.
When DeWitt Clinton and VanRensselaer
Made favorable report on the canal
Political allegiance was made sure,

And from that moment, almost to a man,
The town and county were united as
Progressives, "Whigs," — later Republicans.
With leaders such as Underwood and Seward
The Whig campaign of 1851
Carried Cayuga County, though Scott lost
To Franklin Pierce, a man of compromise.

By 1853 the Whigs had won
An undisputed victory in the state.

The Know-Nothings, before the Klu Klux Klan,
Columbians, the Bund, or Silver Shirts,
Were anti-foreign, anti this and that,
But very seldom pro, with the result
That they soon lost what influence they had
Among the doers of a virile state.
At a huge public meeting Douglas was
Denounced by Democrats and Whigs alike
Because he sponsored the Nebraska Bill.
One of the greatest rallies ever held
In protest against slavery brought about
A union of Free Democrats and Whigs.
They swept the state in 1855
Electing William Seward as senator.

In 1856, '7, and '8
Port Byron men took a very active part
In all Republican assemblies.
John Clark and Samuel Hetfield, both from Mentz,
Held office in the State Convention which
Denounced all slavery as intolerable.
Congressional conventions met in town.
And Freemont polled a huge majority
Although Buchanan went to Washington.

Clark, Hayden, Halsey, Owen, Thompson, Green,
Latham and Button, Fenton, Stokes and Clapp;
Were active in political affairs.
To these add older names like Buck and King
For every man and many women too
Took part in these Republican campaigns.
Torch light parades, speeches and barbecues,
Tableau of all the states with Kansas draped
In deepest mourning, and violation of
Run-away-slave laws by well organized
Underground railroads, were the answers here
Even before the fury of debate

Between the Little Giant and the tall,
Uncompromising lawyer, Lincoln, brought
An end to talk, and set the stage for War!

Part VIII — Civil War

A thousand clicking keys along the line
Of the new railroads shouted out the news.
Fort Sumter fired on, Stars and Stripes torn down
In all the state houses across the south.
Secession of the Carolinas first,
Georgia, Virginia, Mississippi, too,
Then a new flag, the Stars and Bars run up
And president, Jeff Davis, for the South!

Though elders may debate, a war is won
In schoolhouses across a continent.
The Port Byron Free School and Academy
Erected during 1858
Was taught at first by Ceylon Otis, helped
By Truman Fuller, who succeeded him
As principal. When the first guns were fired
In 1861 Fuller resigned,
And, waiting for no bounty, left to join
The 75th New York Volunteers.
When Fuller left he asked a senior boy,
William H. Root, who for two terms had taught
Children in the Free School, to take the post
As principal and give those less advanced
The rudiments of Greek and Latin prose,
Courses in calculus or algebra,
And any other subjects which should be
Included in the academic work.
Young William gulped and stammered out his thanks
Then added, "But, sir, I can not accept
Because, you see, sir, we are going too,
Pat Dwyer, 'Ans' Emmons, Ward, and Kent, and I.
We've talked it over ever since the day

The first guns roared Sumter, and we're sure
That every one with faith in union must
Fight for the flag and we can best be spared."
So with Fuller as captain, fifty-four
Boys from the local school were mustered in
And marched out proudly as "B Company."

They had heard Abolition talk for years
And were convinced that monsters ruled the South,
Just as the Southerners believed these boys
Were heartless money grabbers who conspired
To ruin and degrade their countrymen.
Idealistic and impractical?
These northern boys thought freedom ought to be
A right accorded rich and poor alike,
The equal privilege of white and black,
A sacred trust all honest men should guard
No matter what the cost in pain and grief.
So, sturdily, these young men marched to war.

Well organized and staffed before it left,
The regiment swung through the Auburn street,
Through cheering crowds and waved, and wept, and prayed,
To board the flag decked New York Central train
Which took them to New York. There they embarked
And in December 1861
Docked at Fort Pickens in Florida.
On Santa Rosa Island near the town
Of Pensacola, which the Rebels held,
These raw recruits were disciplined and drilled
Into a tempered instrument of war.
Palm shaded Pensacola, and the Gulf,
And winter sun and flowers seemed paradise
To lads who lived where there was often snow
Before Election; but they missed the hills,
The evenings before the Franklin stoves
With fat red apples or huge popcorn balls.

They missed the trifling gossip of the town
So the Port Byron Gazette was welcome mail
Read by the officers and men alike.
From it they learned the soaring price of wheat,
A dollar thirty-eight — one fifty high —,
And good spy apples seventy-five cents,
Though butter sold for twenty-two a pound.
They read of the disastrous campaigns
Engaged in by their comrades in the East:-
How Coon and Sealy Brown and Edwin Ward
Fought at Big Bethel but came through unharmed.

A port blockaded is a town outflanked
In which both men and stores slowly decay,
And so in May of 1862
The Rebels burned the Pensacola base.
Before the Yankees moved into the town
New regiments were marching out of Mentz.
The hundred and eleventh had been formed
With Warren and Lockwood, Randall, Taylor, Smith,
And others from Port Byron upon its rolls.
These companies were hurried to the East
To join the armies guarding Washington.
Since Kennedy's Light Battery had gone
Into this area some months before
These men, with hopes of meeting friends, poked fun
At the unfortunate 75th
"Stuck in the swamp-lands of Florida."
But Root and Anson Tuller did not need
Such sympathy because these two found friends
Among the Johnnie Rebs. Their regiment
Remained in Pensacola for four months.
During that time officers were assigned
Quarters in private houses. Colonel Dodge
Sent Root and Tuller to a southern home
Where seven children played about their heels.

One day Lieutenant Root received a box
From home and when he opened it out rolled
Some big red apples. The small girls were charmed
By the strange fruit — and by the stories told
Of snow fights and of sleigh rides in the North.
For nearly fifty years after the war
Boxes of apples were shipped south each fall
And every spring the southern ladies sent
A gift of friendship to these Port Byron folks.

News of the hundred thirty eighth came next.
"Its muster roll was filled in eighteen days.
"The bounty paid," wrote Helen Hadger (Root),
"Is three hundred in cash to every man,
"With extra bounties from the town and state;
"But there is talk of drafts because there are
"So few young men who can be spared to go."

Malaria and raging fever were
The only enemies to Fuller's men
Because no rebel forces blocked their raids
And people in the town, although they felt
The Southern cause was just, were kindly folk
Who took the Yanks into their homes and hearts.
So other friendships were established here
Which made the post-war hatreds less intense
And helped both Yank and Rebel to recall
That men of good faith and of generous heart
Who held beliefs dynamically opposed
Were Christian gentlemen in spite of wars.

On August 31, of '62
The 75th sailed for New Orleans
Where General Butler was first in command
Of operations aimed at opening
The Mississippi. Confiscating stores

Of cotton and of sugar for the North
Was made another aim of these campaigns.
Old Samuel Root, who never missed a chance
To write his grandson, Will, the current news
Of church and school, though he was eighty-five,
Told how the minister, William C. Phillips
Was teaching Greek and Latin in the school
But that his only pupil was a girl.
He told, as well, of the New Stage that ran
To meet the morning and evening trains,
"The business at the Western Hotel
Is rushing, for the drummers always say
The best meals anywhere along the route
Are served right here in Port Byron's Hotel."
Such news from home was welcome to the men
Who marched and counter-marched before LaFouche,
Who saw their ranks depleted by the rain
Of canister from the Port Hudson guns,
Who crouched in tangled underbrush and heard
Cries of the living-dead for drink and shade.
When Patrick Dwyer was killed, Lieutenants Root
And Tuller gathered his possessions up
And wrote his sister. It is tasks like this
Rather than hardships of a fierce campaign
Which make such young men old before their time.
Vicksburg was taken, and Port Hudson fell,
The Union forces cut the South in two;
Still hazards of the river were not past
For a disabled transport ran aground
At Sabine Pass and Rebels captured it.
Lieutenant Root, with Whitcomb, Boothe and Roth,
Stevens and others became prisoners
In Texas — Fortunately food was not
Scarce as at Andersonville so these men
Were not the walking skeletons that left
That eastern prison where so many died.
Ten months confined in a huge log stockade,

Then herded like the cattle of the plains
Across three hundred barren Texas miles,
At last exchanged for Southern prisoners!
During these months there was no news at all
Of home, of friends, of progress of the War.

At home the mothers, sisters, sweethearts, wives,
With cows and crops, and double tasks to do,
Had little time to weep. Letters were sent
Because to drop the pen was to lose hope.
Bushels of letters for each prisoner,
And so much news; but the best thing of all
Was "Just to see the Stars and Stripes once more!"

The War moved east to bloody Fisher's Hill
And Winchester. Hope died in southern hearts
But still rebellion flamed and casualties
On both sides mounted.

Colored men from Mentz
Contributed twelve soldiers to the ranks
Of New York negro regiments. They were
Not subject to the draft but went to Troy
As soon as they were privileged to enlist.
Four white men from the local units won
Commissions in such colored companies
And every one sang praises of his men.

The Civil War seems such a little war
If you compare it with the recent ones
And yet the number killed from Port Byron was
Much larger than the local loss sustained
In either of the world-wide holocausts.
Of the three hundred ninety seven men
Who marched from Mentz during the Civil War
Twenty-seven died while in the South
And many returned crippled or infirm
From wounds, from fever, or imprisonment.

Part IX — Railroads, Women's Rights **The Constant Land**

The first stout economic cords to weave
America into loose union were
Her waterways and roads; but the canals
Moved traffic slowly and the urge was strong
For swift communication and transport;
So men believed the railroads would provide
A panacea for all shortages.
The through line of the New York Central was
Completed about 1851
But it worked detriment to little towns.
Because through traffic augmented the growth
Of cities and by-passed the villages.
Centralization of industry left
New problems for the small communities.
The influence of rural thought and ways
Began to wane and cities forged ahead
Creating a strange new economy.
The local craftsmen no longer supplied
The varying needs of farm and villager.
Instead he sold his wool, or work, for cash
And bought sheets woven in a Wooster mill,
Or store shoes manufactured in New York
And shipped in gross lots to such merchants as
John Coon, or Stilwell, who ran a general store.
John Leader or George Jewel no longer came
To draw a paper pattern for each foot,
Then cut the leather and fit boots to last
The entire family for another year.
Cash grew important, no man cared to live
On goods supplied by farm and village store,
So shoppers went by train to Syracuse
And took their trade away from merchants here.
Express trains on the Central did not slow
For whistle stops like Weedsport and Port Byron.

Such travelers as came were forced to change
To slovenly, outmoded, local trains.

The Beehive House (today Carl Smith's garage)
Was built in 1820. The canal
Ran at the level of the second floor
With entrance from the tow path to the shop
Of Haight and Hadger, harness makers. They
Kept busy, for canal men brought in work
Demanding quick replacements and repairs.
The loaded barges must keep on the move
And teamsters must have harnesses to haul
Towboats, a wagon, or an Osborne Plow.

The new canal, complete in '58,
Had been a disappointment to Port Byron
For Beach's Mill, not on the right of way
Had been destroyed by fire the year before
And other business men whose shipping docks
Were rendered useless by the change of course
Did not show inclination to rebuild.
Almost before the first barge loads of grain
Had been dragged east the new canal required
A widening of the channel through the town.
Some of the finest old homes in Port Byron
Had been destroyed by dredging the new cut
And so, though dry-docks and boat builders moved,
And damage claims were settled by the State,
The loss sustained was greater than the gain

When agitators started the long fight
For Woman Suffrage the campaign began
With a convention national in scope
Held in the village of Seneca Falls
In 1848. Port Byron sent
An active and enthusiastic group.
Among them Hannah Latham, Phoebe King,

And Sarah Hoffman were vociferous.
It was Miss Hoffman who later became
Famous, or infamous, judge for yourselves,
A jury of her peers could not agree.
Miss Sarah could bake luscious fluffy pies,
And Dr. Hoffman owned a cherry tree;
But it leaned over neighbor Armstrong's fence.
It may have been the spinster had argued
With Armstrong, and that disputatious male
Resented the barbed tongue with which she preached
Her modern theory that a woman could
Manage affairs of state as well as men,
And forcibly reform the wicked world.
At any rate that gentleman forbade
Miss Sarah gathering fruit across the fence.
Sarah persisted, Armstrong gently pushed,
Miss Hoffman fell, protesting, from the tree.
The suit dragged on from court to higher court
Until at last a verdict was obtained
Awarding Sarah damage for her fall
And giving Dr. Hoffman and his heirs
All fruit which hung upon the leaning tree
Provided he could harvest it without
Trespass upon his neighbor's property.
This verdict has established precedent
By which such cases are judged to this day.
Though Sarah never lived to cast a vote
Or become famous as a suffragette
She has her name in law books through the land.

The bubble of the forty-niners' burst
But with the completion of the New York Central line
The age of railroads lured the prosperous.
Chauncey Depew was looked upon with awe
And when the North Cayuga Company
Proposed an Auburn-Sodus Railroad line
The village fathers dared to bond Port Byron

GIGANTIC CELEBRATION ! !

OF the COMPLETION OF THAT STUPENDOUS UNDERTAKING,
**CAYUGA NORTHERN
 RAIL ROAD.**



PRESIDENT.



VICE-PRESIDENT.

POOR AND NEVER BUILT RAILROAD.

AT PORT BYRON, NEW YORK, U. S. A.

That HIGHLY HONORABLE and ENTIRELY HONEST body, the Board of Directors and original discoverers of the CAYUGA NORTHERN Railroad, having completed their labors to their entire satisfaction, would respectfully announce to a too commanding public, Generous Incentive their Programme for the Grandest Celebration, ever given by any Road, not exceeding the Corduroy Road to Seneca Falls. NO GUN, THE QUIETER THIN THING IS DONE, THE BETTER. The day will be ushered in at a very early hour by the President of the Board clad in purple and blue robe, mounted by the Boarding Committee for the same. Worn by the Montezuma Head that played the death knell to the Anti-slavery. Pending the arrival of the Marshal, who is to come by the Provincial roads & Noddy Bay Road, and will certainly be late, the numerous concourse of spectators will be invited to look at the Director's Report for 1873, on large black board at Noddy Hall. Made on the Lyre. The following letters will then be read by the Attorney of the road.

See also, Director's Report 1873.

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For thirty thousand --- and risk private funds.
Surveys were made but not a tie was laid,
The local financiers lost heavily
But public funds were saved. Relief
Was celebrated in the public square
By burning effigy and slap-stick fun
Aimed at the "Sodus Mule Road." Printer's Ink
And fine bond paper beautifully engraved
Built many lofty castles in the air
For honest men; this railroad was but one.

Savings are lost but while rich land survives
The great potential wealth remains unchanged.
Still in our fathers' memory there have been
Years when the very elements rebelled
Against the dominance of plow and scythe
And men could coax no harvests from their fields.
Such years are sometimes years of floods or droughts
But once there came a year of killing frosts.
Spring came unwillingly on laggard feet.

Across Owasco and the Genesee.

She kissed the southern faces of the hills
Then shivered back in maidenly retreat.
Before she set the ice bound streamlets free
Darkness, returning, brought the frost that kills.
Late March saw snow piled to the window sills
And April birds starved in still frozen fields.
May crops were seared as by a withering flame
When thundering winds and sudden hail storms came.
Instead of bright abundance June should yield
A black frost ushered in a sad July
Whose spindling corn and sparsely bearded wheat
Failed to mature beneath the August sky.
Frowning September made failure complete.

But the canal brought east Ohio grain
And hay from Steuben County fed the herds.
Spring smiled at last, the fields produced again
 And farmers soon forgot their bitter words
 Loved the rich land and wooed it as of old.
 It still rewards their sons with living gold
When it is blessed with sunshine and with rain.

Part X — New Businesses

By 1868 most of the men
Who had served in the war between the States
Had taken up their interrupted lives
 Almost as if that horror had not been.
The wagon maker, Warren, limped back to town,
Worked for a while, courted his English love,
And married her. John Stewart, the old ex-slave,
Who owned a house on Pine Street in Nauvoo,
Went hurrying up and down the hill again
To tend the white folks gardens as he did
Before, at fifty-eight, he went to war
To earn for other blacks less blessed than he
The kind of freedom that he prized so much.

New faces smiled from changing Main Street shops.
Oswego County nurtured R. R. Stilwell
Whose father moved from Altmar to Port Byron
About the year of 1865,
Opened a general store and prospered well.
Father and son, and grand-son in his turn
Were far sighted, progressive merchants here.
For years a huge shoe advertised the wares
Which filled the building on the corner full
From basement to well lighted upper rooms
Where carpets and linoleums were stored.
Today Howard Wethey is proprietor
But the store occupies only a part

Of the main floor, the rest is living space
For his energetic, fast growing brood.

The Port Byron Times had a new editor.
But ill luck followed it and Cyrus Marsh,
For fire destroyed the plant in '68.
Its rival sheet, Clark's Port Byron Chronicle,
Was left the only newspaper in town.
The Chronicle, like the Cayuga Chief,
And other country newspapers enjoyed
Its greatest affluence during the years
From 1880 until 1910.
It has survived many vicissitudes,
Poor presses, panics, booms; but editors
Like astute Suvie King grew with the times
Developing the Port Byron Chronicle
Into a weekly which does not compete
With city dailies but supplies a need
Peculiar to Port Byron's economy.
The Chronicle, last owned by Mr. Fox,
But now published in Weedsport with the Chief,
Is an important asset to the town
Because it helps create true unity
By bringing local men and happenings
To the attention of those most concerned
With the improvement of our little world.

Apparently the druggist, Richard Hoff
Moved to Port Byron in 1856.
His pharmacy in the Masonic Block
Stocked almost everything from paints to herbs
To judge by the advertisements he wrote.
Hoff, and his son, sold to a Mr. Smith
Who stayed a year or so and then moved on
Without changing the color or design
Of living for his customers and friends,
This good apothecary finally came

Under the ownership of William Blake.
A licensed pharmacist, Blake could compound
Any prescription Dr. Button wrote.
He, and the sons who follow him, have built
More than a business vital to Port Byron.
Honor them for the effort they have put
Into the betterment of school and church,
And for young pharmacists like Bernard Welch —
And Stanley Roney, whom they trained and schooled
In honest dealing — and a valued trade.

Fame often comes unasked to quiet men,
While booming voices of such auctioneers
As Sam Devore and Daniel Buck soon die;
So when soft-spoken Dr. Allen came,
Port Byron acquired a citizen of worth.
Though crippled in the War this surgeon cared
For patients at his home, but his chief thought
Was preservation of perishable foods
Such as his men had lacked upon the field.
He patented a rotary machine
For drying apples and a formula
For packaged mince meat. Both products appealed
To wholesale grocers and the retail trade.
These packaged pies made fortunes for such men
As Thomas Dougherty, Champlin and Maine,
Who processed, packed, and sold the tempting food.
In 1885 the Port Byron Shop
Was burned, and rumor spread that Dougherty
Was moving to Chicago but instead
He bought the building which is used today.
Business outran supply so Dougherty
Expanded, adding a Chicago plant
Where H. C. Gutchess and Davis were trained.
Sam Dougherty died and Gutchess returned
To operate the pie shop in Port Byron.
He later began business for himself

But Ervin Davis stayed in Illinois
And reared his family before he came home
To gather up the long-abandoned threads
Of family, friends, and village life again.
His daily gift is not the drive of youth
Bright with ambition, but the mellow glow
Of constant quiet warmth and graciousness.
Today the changing pattern of the years
Blends such considered gentleness of age
With the harsh tones of more impetuous youth
In a revitalized community.

Part XI — Fires, the First Fire Department

Though Beach's Mill had done huge export trade
Buying both western and domestic wheat.
The farmers scarcely missed it when it burned
Because, with changing times came changing needs.
Poultry and dairy products, fruit and wool
Had largely replaced wheat as market crops
For hilly eastern farms could not compete
With the unstinted yield of prairie lands.
Still grain was grown for stock and poultry feed
And ground in lesser mills for local trade.
One used the dam, the raceway, and the site
Where Aaron Knapp had built in early times.
That building, new in 1845
Housed several run of stone and was equipped
To grind 100 barrels in a day.
In 1865 this mill was sold
To John C. Dixon and his partner, White.
They prospered but the hungry flames
Devoured their building even as it claimed
So many earlier businesses and homes.
John Dixon, unlike Beach, dared build again;
Owasco Outlet turns new water wheels
And Drumlin farms keep modern hoppers full

For Irving Warren who bought the Dixon plant
From T. Fayette, John Dixon's only son;
And for the Wilt's who own the Green Street mill.

In line with growing emphasis on stock
And dairy farming a new enterprise
Began in '67 when Dave Mills
Jacobs and Osburn helped to organize
The first cheese factory in the town of Mentz.
Production, processing and sale of milk
In fluid form for home consumption and
For cheese and butter has increased into
An industry of great importance here.

While Guy VanAntwerp ran the creamery
Firkins of golden butter won awards
For color, flavor, pack and purity
At every State Fair where they were displayed.
Butter is packed in pasteboard cartons now
And Marsh is butter-maker but the churning
Are turning milk into the same fine food
Produced in the old creamery by the lock,
Then in the Green Street plant, but of late years
Established in a building of its own.

Disasters like the burning of the mills
And of Smith's drygoods store are tragedies
Which shrink some towns into oblivion;
Some, like Chicago, build on grander scale;
For Port Byron there has been a middle course
Because the danger, recognized, was met
By civic minded men like Halsey who
Donated land to build a reservoir,
And John Davis who worked tirelessly until
A water system was installed in town.
By fall of '70 hydrants were set
And a fire company was organized.

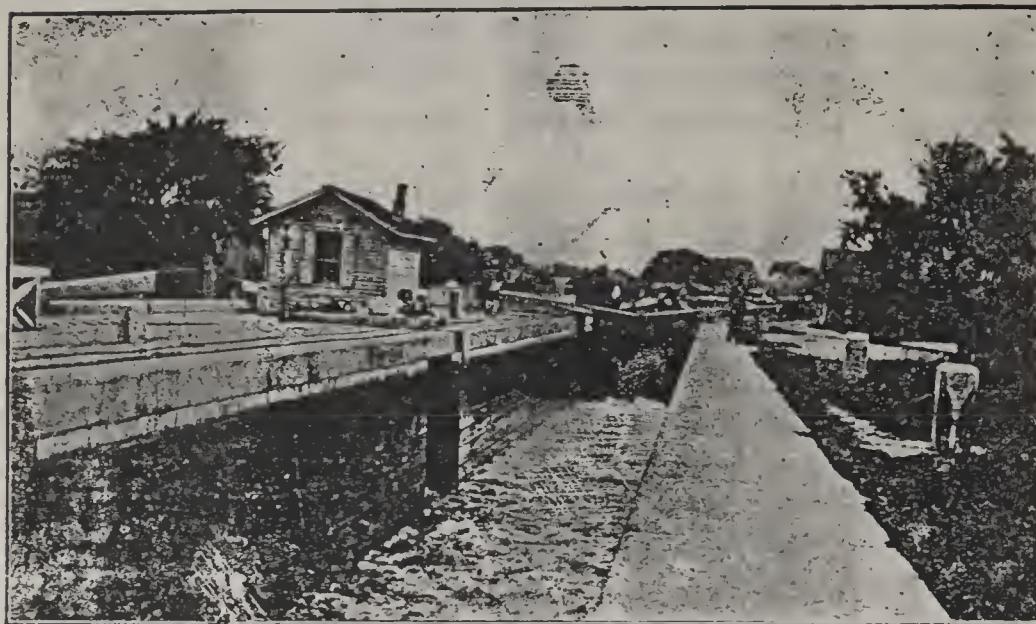
At first the village water served only
The business district while surrounding hills
Were guarded merely by the local wells
And neighbors' buckets. Picture Mr. Hess,
The cigar maker, rushing from his shop
To help the lawyer, Converse, pull by hand
The two wheeled cart on which the hose was coiled;
Or John Kick riding bare-back to the fire
Announced by furious clanging of the bell



South Main Street (before the trolley came)
H. C. Gutchess Plant, Fire House, Chronicle Office and
Post Office (Dolly Vosburg was Postmaster Then)

First in the fire house, then if that alarm
Was not sufficient it was taken up
By school and church bells till their clamor rose
A weird uncanny bedlam to be heard
From quiet Oakland farms to Henry School
And the old settlement at Haydenville.

It was not long before the residents
Of unprotected districts in the town
Insisted on extension of the mains
So that the hills on King Street and Nauvoo
Could also have some safe-guards against fire.



Lock House



On The New Erie
Approaching The Locks -- Port Byron

Along the heel path of the new canal
Docks, lumber yards and warehouses were built.
From the Lock Market where Nate Elliott
Supplied the tow-boats fresh killed beef and pork
Past Tanner's dry dock, busy with repairs,
And the bridge building shop of Mr. Ames
The shore was lined with tradesmen who enjoyed
Prosperity because of the canal.
With this assortment of combustible
Buildings and sheds there was a constant threat
Of fire. In 1887 a tramp
Holed up among the piles of merchandise
In Armstrong's warehouse (now Wight's Lumber yard).
His careless match, or dropped cigar butt lay
Smouldering and then flamed to holocaust
In which was lost his life, the ware-house stock,
And, almost, the frame church across the street.
Dashing into the smoke-filled, smouldering church
A negro Christian wrapped the altar cloth
About the Bible and ran down Main Street
Shouting, "The Sacred Word of God is safe,
His house may burn, His Teachings are secure."
Its pages yellowed by the passing years
That Bible binds the Federated Church
To precepts of the past which are revered,
As its bright window points the future's road
Through sacrifice to Christian unity.
Steeple and roof were burned beyond repair
But the town clock, first pridefully installed
By Samuel Harnden, Senior, was repaired
By John, his son, and carefully replaced
In the new belfry from which it has seen
The wisdom and the folly of Port Byron..

Though iron ore and coal for furnaces
Were not Cayuga County resources,
Fine brass and metal work has always been

Produced by master craftsmen in Port Byron.
Among the smiths and wagon-makers who
Were classed as skilful workmen are the names
Of Gilbert, Litts, Higley and Houghtaling;
But more specialized metal work was done
Some 80 years ago by moulder, Shotz,
Who cast new tools and repaired ploughshares in
His shop below the dam. That building now
Is home of Caldwell's marine hardware plant.
As Shotz and Gilbert hammered glowing iron
Still larger sledges rang in strange brown hands
As dark haired, singing workers spiked the rails.

***Part XII—West Shore Italians settle,
Factory, Bicycles, Baseball***

In meeting tracks the West Shore Road was born.
The first train through in 1884
Left a new local problem for Port Byron.
Dismissed Italian workmen filled the bars
And often, because poorly understood,
Fought bloody battles with men from the boats.
Leaderless, homeless, in a strange new land
They were the outcasts of society,
But there were men of vision in the group.
DeBottis, Saverese and Rossi, first
Settled along the tow-path west of town.
Swampland was purchased, ditched, grubbed clean and sowed.
Italian women came to join their men.
Homes were established, bright-eyed children born
At first in hovels, want and ignorance.
But industry and eagerness to make
This great new country theirs has brought about
Changes beyond belief. Today's Italians are
Among the most respected men in town.
Their children are our teachers, lawyers, priests,
Artists and business men, prosperous, keen,
Americans in fact as well as name.

Disorders like the Port Byron Lock riots
Showed the necessity for social growth
And helped create new concepts of man's worth.
Today the migrant worker is not dropped
Defenseless in a strange community
Which does not understand him or his needs
And has no means of helping if it would.

Because the railroad failed to offer towns
Like Weedsport and Port Byron an equal chance
With cities in the heavy shipping trades,
Light industries which never would require
Large freight houses and sidings, settled here.
Davis and Dickey, Vosburg, Roney, Hess,
And other fine cigar shops in Port Byron
Employed about one hundred skilled tradesmen.
Their brands were known from Maine to Washington.
This industry of the gay '90's has
Succumbed to the machine made cigarette
But watching strong deft hands wield skillful knives
And savoring odors of the dusty shops
Are among treasured memories of the past
That blend with derby hats and high-wheeled bikes
Into what seems a fabulous design
Its colors rich beyond reality.

Today the stores are crying for such shirts
As Jennie Ward and Amie Gutchess made
In the Gault factory; first above Crane's Store,
Then, as the business grew, a building was
Erected to accommodate the shop.
The clothing workers under Mr. Gault
Were better paid than in the city shops
For he took active interest in each girl —
So jobs in Port Byron were sought eagerly
By women from the nearby villages.
When Gault closed down, the building which he used



Tatgenhorst Block, Utica St., burned Christmas Eve 1912

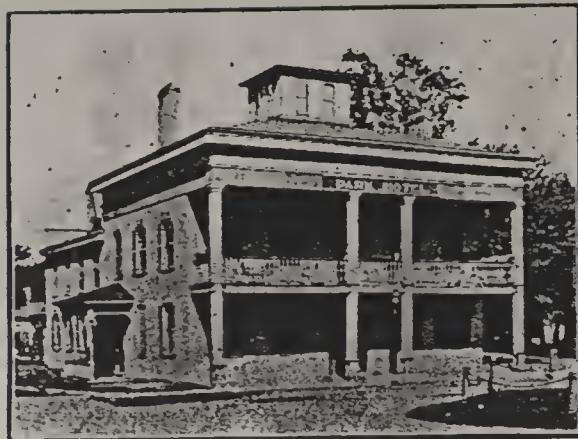
Was taken over by Jay Dougherty
And "Daisy" Loomis for a hardware store.
Later the Grange Hall was located there
Then Daniel Pultz used it for a garage.
Today it is in fine repair again
For Emiel Martens owns the building now,
And conducts his produce sales from there.

Most colorful in pattern and design
The 90's waltz across the tapestry
Of Port Byron life wild as a hep cat's dream.
Hal Hayden, Doug Gutchess, and Will Stilwell,
Gay blades, once rode their high-wheeled bicycles
Abreast, up Main Street, in a big parade—
The grade to the canal bridge was a feat
Accomplished by all three but Will's bad luck
Thrust rut or stick beneath that wobbly wheel.
Down the stone steps, across the tow path mud
Into the murky water of the ditch
Will and his high wheel bounced, bumped, tumbled, splashed--

They pulled Stilwell out but the high wheel remained
A mass of twisted spokes and broken rims
Beneath what now is Elliott's front lawn.

The rivalry between the elders was
For spanking teams and roadsters who could trot
The seventy odd miles through Oswego
To Altmar and the North Country from which
The Stilwell's and Blakeman's moved some years before.
Newkirk, the livery keeper, would rent out
A carry-all for picnic parties or
A fine top buggy to a hopeful swain
Whose farm plugs could not step briskly enough
To make Cross Keys for supper Sunday night.
But more often the parties were made up
Of cyclists who went in larger groups.
The Fenn girls, Mary Warren and Pearl Stilwell
Sometimes enjoyed the thrills of such a ride
With escorts like Clarence Godfrey, Francis Root
Dickey or the telegrapher, John Trimm;
For almost every young person in town
Owned a bicycle and enjoyed the sport.

Baseball was popular, the baseball field
Was in the lot where Samuel Harnden
Has cabins now. Young Dr. Gilbert pitched



Park Hotel dates from the bustling railroad days.

"Cap" Wright, "Codge" Wood, and "Dolly" Vosburgh caught.
In those days Vosburghs owned the Park Hotel;
But not for long. Its ownership has changed
A dozen times. Its reputation too,
Has swung from good to bad, and bad to good
With each new owner though it never was
A "Raines Hotel" (ten beds, ten forks, ten plates,
And a big bar, —but very scanty food).
The restaurant long owned by Alice Powers
Was, in those days, another hotel bar
Made legal by the passage-way which joins
The restaurant and dwelling house next door.
But worse than these was the sad "Comfort House"
One of the many where indulgences
Roused prohibition fervor in the minds
Of churchmen young and old. The movement gained
Fresh impetus when an inebriate's horse
Dragged home his lifeless master one cold night.
This tragedy precipitated vote
On local option, and Port Byron went dry.

Part XIII—Women Missionaries, Physician, Teachers; Electricity

A roistering town, a doing town, packed full
Of energies, such as in earlier days
Had motivated men like John Ransier
Who brought his family down from Canada,
Sought outlet in revivals and the Church.
The Christian spirit and the mission fields
Gained such recruits as Nellie Rathburn who
Spent years in Burma teaching for her Lord.
Miss Carrie Telford who attended school
With Jennie Ward back in the 70's
Heard the appeal for mission teachers too.
Her father, who owned the rich Halsey farm
(Which Frank Jones bought some forty years ago)
Approved. Carrie was sent away to school
And finally, as a Presbyterian,
Into the pagan empire of Japan.
In the late '90's Miss Telford returned
An invalid. She lived with Dr. Stewart
Who cared for her faithfully as he would
Were she his mother or a maiden aunt.

Adelaide Armstrong taught history and math.
In the old Free School and Academy
During the 1880's. What she earned
Was spent to educate her sister, Madge,
Who studied medicine, a field unique
For women in those times, though one or two
Like Dr. Mary Walker had attained
Distinction in the field of surgery.
Her training finished, her career begun,
Miss Armstrong went direct to India
To serve in a hospital whose support
Was largely drawn from congregations here.
While there she married a young minister

But in a few years, both of them, renouncing
Foreign duty came back to the States
To live at home and preach good fellowship.
These three, and Mrs. Swift in Japore,
Followed new paths as did the pioneers,
Their grandfathers, who built in this new land.

Their stories may have tempted Helen Root
Whose brilliant mind and sharp incisive wit
Made her both friends and enemies in school.
But from her writings it appears she had
No strong convictions; in fact she professed
Religious skepticism at the time
When, as an honor student in Cornell,
She first enrolled in Bible History class.
Quick in decision Belle wasted no time
Experimenting in related fields
But started preparation for a life
Of missionary teaching in the East.
The protests of her brothers, Frank,
Carrol and Joe, were lightly turned aside.
For William Root repeated the precept
By which his father had taught him to live,
"Think for yourself, then do what you think right."
He asked one promise only, "If you go,
Please write your family at least twice a week."
From training school, from Ceylon, letters came
Across the world. Each one when it was read
Was smoothed and filed. The story is complete;
Strange sights, sounds, odors, languages and rites
For seven years. Then letters from the States,
Revivals where she spoke, books she had read,
Rough drafts of sermons, visits with her friends,
Decision to be a Free Methodist
And sail again for India to teach,
Not high cast Hindus but the poorest poor:

Meeting with Gandhi, the young lawyer who
Was just beginning the long bitter fight
For Indian independence in those days.
At last, when jungle fever brought her home,
Helen I. Root assumed another role,
As editor and writer she worked on
The missionary books and magazines
Which were printed by the Free Methodists.
Although the author of several books,
She never found time to write of herself
But a young friend, Ruth Tapper, has written
A biography documented by
Church records, and the letters Belle wrote home.

Another brilliant woman from Port Byron
Was Dr. Clara Barrus who became
A medical doctor, practiced a while,
In Scarsdale, where John Burroughs lived and worked.
In course of years Dr. Barrus became
Physician to the famous naturalist
With whom she traveled, sharing in his work
Doubling as secretary, doctor, nurse.
Skillful with words, when "Dr. Clara" wrote
The novel, "Drumlin," through its pages moved,
Thinly disguised, the people of Port Byron.
This roused the enmity of many who
Would bury village vice and virtue deep
Among the stories better left untold.
Outside Port Byron her name is better known
For "Our Friend, John Burroughs," which is thought
An excellent and comprehensive work.

The opportunities so long denied
To women, and so earnestly espoused
By Sarah Hoffman in her losing fight
For suffrage came to fruition in
Careers of women whose accomplishments

Were achieved in far places, not at home
Under protection of family and friends.
Such eager minds leap barriers of sex,
Force recognition of abilities
In professions which men have long believed
Beyond the scope of woman's intellect.

**Part XIV—Educators, Spanish-American War
Telephones. Trolleys, Autos**

As changing spindles change yarn textures so
New educators modify ideals.
That Truman Fuller led his students out
To war was proof his teaching far outreached
The Greek and algebra in faded texts.
Though emphasis was on the facts themselves
And not their application, the Free School
Survived, for men of knowledge merited
Respect. The foresight given those who taught
From Ceylon Otis through the changing years,
Theories, and subject matter, made the school
An ever growing power. Educators
Like Morehouse, Harris, Moore and Arthur Gates
Do much toward creating progressive thought
In private lives and civic management.

Fine thread is never spun by unskilled hands
So, who and what our fathers' teachers were
Will shape, to large extent, our grandsons' lives.
The first license for teaching in Port Byron
Was Miss Celesta King's certificate
Issued in 1858. From then
Through the expanding functions of the school
Progressive leaders have built futures here.
Though Louis Root, the civil engineer,
The doctor, Byron Mead, and sixteen more
Were graduated under VanAllen
During the early 1870's

No settled leadership or study course
Was established for the Academy
For principals changed as the seasons change
From 1861 until the fall
Of 1877. These men,
Though scholarly and sincere, were not trained
As teachers, and they lacked the teacher's gift
Of building leaders greater than themselves.
The influence Professor Morehouse had
Over the early graduates is shown
By professional attainments of the group
Who entered engineering and the law,
Or became doctors, teachers, ministers,
And missionaries. His teaching displayed
A masterly approach to abstract truth
And the conviction that an alert mind,
Given the tools, could mould Valhalla from
Earth's facile clay. Teachers like Mary Warren,
S. Douglas Gutchess and Joseph F. Sweet,
Inspired by him, picked up the torch and cross,
And in their turn marshalled the great parade
Of youth into the lengthening road of life.
And passed on tools of knowledge and of faith
Put in their hands by Morehouse years before.

When Harris came he moved in lighter vein.
Eager and young, he mixed laughter and sport
With Greek and Latin prose. Young Larabee,
The engineer, Flo Blakeman, Mary Warren
And others of the younger set became
Tennis enthusiasts, and friendly games
With the professor were not frowned upon
By Reverend Beebe, who blacklisted cards
And dancing, but approved young people who
"Attended church and enjoyed wholesome fun."
For the ten years Professor Harris taught,
The facts assimilated were the test

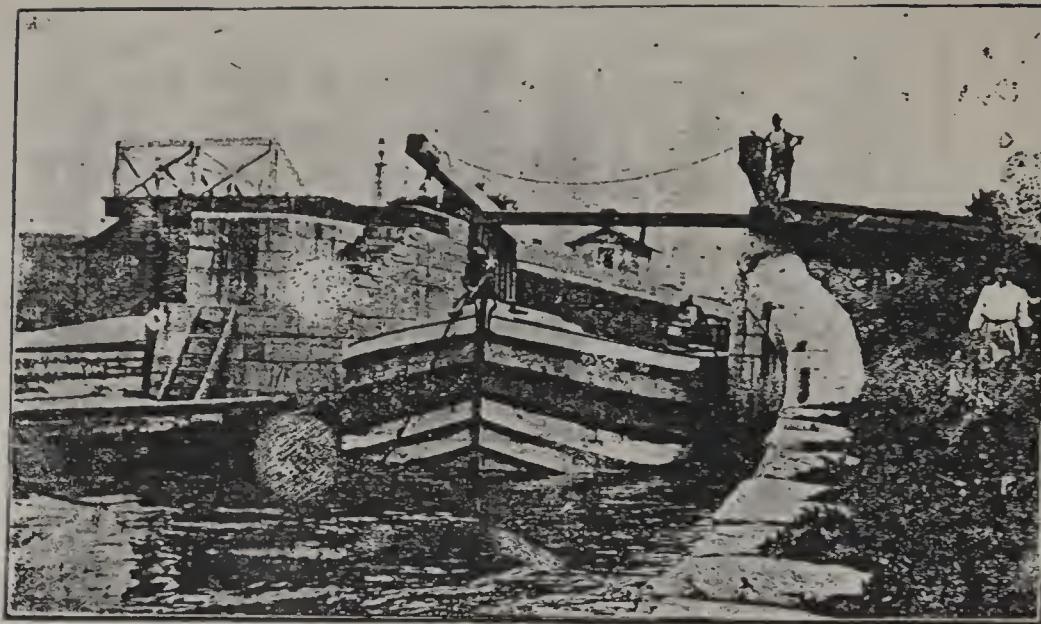
Of a successful teacher. (This may be)
Still leadership goes far beyond the facts.
The inspiration of these men, not what they taught.
Gave Spaulding's engineering genius chance
To be developed. Rochester was proud
Of the water system which he installed,
And Syracuse also gained benefit
From work he did on their water supply.
The Port Byron school trained Dr. Bertha Chase,
Clinton Burns, and lawyers for many courts,
Made of Miss Vera Fenn a teacher who
Was gifted with the power to recreate
Macbeth and Ivanhoe as living men.
Today, retired, she writes light graceful verse
Lovely as sunset of an April day,
And prose with strength to find a publisher.

In 1898 the Free School burned.
This fire consumed the aging masonry
The wooden stairs and hand rail over which
Professors had turned mad-cap boys who dared
Defy authority, play truant, shirk:-
But brave traditions lived in wise young hearts
For it had taught Ed Seymour the ideals
Which led him to enlist for war with Spain.
(Of course historians who write today
Claim Cuban freedom was no cause for war
But the results have been commendable,
For Pan-Americanism has grown
Into a potent force working toward peace.)
Whether the war was justified or not
Young men who fought the Spaniards were sincere
In their desire to build a better world.
So honor Seymour, young Irving LaDue
And the two brothers, Joe and Francis Root
For espousing a cause they thought was right.
And honor those who taught them such ideals.



In 1900 Port Byron High School was a fine new building.
It was soon outgrown and crowded as the Old Free School
had been.

Before the ashes of the past had cooled
The Port Byron High School building was begun.
The peppery Scotch doctor, Alvin Stewart,
Topliffe and T. M. Crane were on the board
Which undertook building a modern school.
After three years of changing leadership
Professor Moore, a young, ambitious man
Took charge as principal in 1902.
His ideas of a school were functional.
Courses were planned which dealt with daily life,
Typing and book-keeping became a part
Of the expanding school curriculum..
Moore, like his predecessors, had the gift
Of inspiration. Under him such men
As Earl Blake and young Dr. Stewart were trained.



HEAVE HO --



Dry Docks and Boat Building were important here.

In town, the "Raging Erie" still was king,
Boat building and repair were the chief trades;
But Warren's lumber yard and Bert Shotz' store
Were prospering; Arthur Blauvelt was
Becoming a well-known solicitor.
While Lottie Tanner was a moving force

In church and Star affairs. Home talent plays
Were directed and coached by Mrs. Hess.
Del Clapp, as road commissioner, began
Construction of a new road to replace
The "Auburn Plank" with its three toll houses
Which collected six cents for every horse
Driven along its bumpy right of way.
The Denman house, just above Haydenville,
Was one toll point at which the gates swung wide
When the black colts which Flora Blakeman drove
Were stung by bees. The frightened team
Ran frantically through town. When they would slow
Miss Mary Warren, the white-faced passenger,
Applied the whip. The weary horses were
Pulled to a willing stop near the Forbes farm.
Flo turned, and drove them to the village square.
George Newkirk, who had watched the runaway,
Boasted to Kick, the village constable,
"That team is broken now, they never will
Attempt to run with anyone again."
And Miller, who was local auctioneer,
Later the county sheriff, added praise,
"These girls are horsewomen in more than name.
Could your son, Vern, have handled that young team?"

Like the black colts, the '90's raced through town
But with the turning of the century
Progress and retrogression both became
Accelerated. It was 1905!
Charles Weston and some local business men
Were organizing the phone company
Which serves the towns of Montezuma, Mentz,
Conquest, Spring Lake, and most of Emerson.
Tiny, but brave, it bucked the powerful Bell
And won against that telephone empire.
In an emergency in '45
Its lines handled a 13,000 peak

Though the 500 patrons normally
Make only 3,000 calls every day.
This independent company is now
One of the few in the United States
Owned and maintained by local capital.

Another project born in 1905
Was the inter-urban, R. S. & E.
Which roughly paralleled the old canal,
And the Auburn trolley line whose right of way
Followed the never built "Owasco Branch."
These supplied rapid transportation for
Commuters who worked in the Auburn shops,
Or theatre goers to Syracuse
Where the old Wieting, now Lincoln Garage,
Was tryout spot for well cast Broadway plays,
And one of the San Carlo Opera stands
Where Carmen or Othello could be heard
One season and Il Traviatore the next.
Wonderful venture, but doomed from the first
By fast improving roads and gasoline,
The trolley died after some twenty years
Leaving its backers poorer, wiser men —
And automobiles undisputed lords
Of rural transportation and the town.

PART IX

Along with telephone and trolley came
The rural free delivery of mail.
"Dorse" Commings, Charley Hadden, Filkins, Ware
And Streeter were the first five carriers.
Their horses sloughed through muddy rutted roads,
Where even Model T's would have bogged down,
And in the winter snow their cutters slipped
Across the fields when unplowed roads were full.
Their tribulations, and complaints from folk
The doctors could not reach in time of need

Did much toward fostering rural demand
For better country roads, and road repair.
Plowing and graveling no longer were
Jobs the progressive farmer did himself
But the concern of the community..
This was about the time that Gutchess bought
His "Steam Buggy", the first auto in town.

Soon Dr. Gilbert saw the lovely lines
Of the new Buick. He could not resist.
But, after he had purchased the fine car,
He continued to drive his big black horse
Because, being trained in anatomy,
He decided that he should know its parts
Before he drove the snorting metal steed.
Doctor dissected it so thoroughly
A consultation had to be arranged
To save the patient from the village dump.
A mechanic performed the miracle
Of healing the dismembered metal corpse
By skillful use of screwdriver and wrench,
And brought the engine's rattling pulse to life.
Buicks, since then, have served Doc. Gilbert well,
And served, as well, the sick in many homes.

Electric wires followed the trolley rails.
In 1907 Port Byron undertook
Construction of a local power station.
Municipally owned, this lighting plant
Saved tax payers a tidy sum each year
In better street lighting and cheap current
Supplied from the Niagara Lockport lines.
When trolley cars were scrapped the village power
Was converted into 220 volt
Better to serve the farm and household needs.



Dr. Vaughn's drug store, horse and buggy days



Crane's Store when Hitching Posts were a Must
- 64 -

All these improvements! Yet the town grew small,
The population dropped; Gault's factory closed
And cigar making gradually decreased.
But Lou Davis was still the milliner
That city patrons called upon for hats,
And drummers, who would sell to Lowe or Crane,
Dined at the Howard House where meals were so good
That banquet parties came from Syracuse
And the Alumni celebrated there.
The dandy who would have a mustache clipped
For such a function, or to squire his girl
Patronized Jake Fickeisen or Bill Clark.
The McEntee brothers could also give
A fancy haircut and a soothing shave.

For those who had not yet attained the age
Of vanity there was the joy of food.
A slimy pickle from the brine filled keg
Which stood on Jim Hearn's counter was a treat
For youngsters though their lunch boxes were full
Of bread and butter, hard boiled eggs and cake.
A greater thrill was skating twisting lanes
Between the cat-tail islands on clear nights
When every breath became a small white cloud
Like incense rising toward the calm pale moon;
Or scampering among the busy teams
And men when January's ice was cut.
Before the frigidaire, ice was a crop
As necessary as the winter's wood;
Sawed into blocks, loaded and hauled away,
The mill pond harvest was carefully stored
In deep ice houses each layer was spread
With sawdust insulation to retard
The melting until pieces were dragged out
By John Kick when the summer weather came.
This scant supply, though scaly and unclean
Cooled milk for many village families: —

Those without ice-boxes tried to keep food
In carthen crocks set on the cellar floor
Or in a pail hung half-way down the well.

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It may have been a vehicle like this
Which terrified the aging Acre's horse.

Bill Carr, John Davis, Ervin Davis, Dorothy Miller
Scene from pageant in 1945 "From the United States
to the United Nations"

Sam Thomas and the other meat cutters
Kept thick-walled wooden coolers well supplied;
Nate and Jay Elliott, though butchers first,
Who catered chiefly to canaler's needs,
Required refrigeration like the rest.

On hot days it was not unusual
For each market to use 500 pounds
Of ice, and still spoilage was serious.
Electric coolers and display cases
Today keep more meat in a smaller space
And can preserve it for weeks at a time.

When Riccardo Bonnelli was a boy
Not old enough to run away and skate
Or chase Kick's wagon for a chip of ice
Folks called him "Georgie Bunn". The house next door,
Now the Fordyce place, was then the Acres home.
An egg wholesaler, Acres often took
Young Georgie with him when he shipped a load.
Once backfire from a "gas buggy" panicked
The Acre horse — it bolted — Georgie flew
Over the back of the high wagon seat
Among the bouncing crates of breaking eggs.
The five year old's frightened protesting wail
Emerging from the load of scrambled eggs
Did not resemble the fine baritone
Which has, for years, won honors at "The Met,"
But Methodists who had enjoyed the fine
Duets his parents rendered from the choir
Were not surprised that Georgie had a voice.

Though Edwin Wethey owned the railroad bus
And Andy Baker drove it every day,
Few passengers entrained at North Port Byron.
Short trips were made by trolley, not by steam,
When this new century was in its teens;
Today, grown older, it moves faster yet
And even speeding air-liners seem slow; —
But in the 1920's there was time
And hourly trolleys filled the local need.
The stucco trolley depot was for years
The travel center for adults. It made

A courting place for high school lads because
They rode from Montezuma, Haydenville,
Throop, Centerport and old "Stop 69."
At four o'clock the MacNamaras, Carrs
Murrays and Westons hurried up from school.
There Louise Robinson, the blond from Throop,
Met tall Clair Calkins, who coached basket ball.
Kidding and courtship, later wedding bells;
For such is life in any country town.

PART XV — Laurels Won Away From Home

A quiet village, living in the past?
No! Port Byron's influence is felt today
In the accomplishments of graduates
Like Harry Elmer Barnes, historian;
Also a well known criminologist,
Long recognized as an authority.
He has received honorary degrees
From universities and colleges.
Still Harry claims Port Byron as his home,
Takes interest in village and school affairs
And is a firm friend to many local men.
Willoughby Waterman, classmate of Barnes,
Is now at Brooklyn College where he heads
The Department of Sociology.
His forefathers were Spring Lake pioneers
Not long after the Kings and Bucks came here —
So when he married pretty Nellie King,
Reporter for her father's Chronicle,
The marriage was thought "most appropriate."
These leaders of today as high school boys
Were helped and guided by Professor Moore,
Who was the first to modernize the school.

Success has been expected and attained
By many educators from Port Byron
So Halsey Knapp's fine work at Farmingdale

And the diverse attainment of Fred Stone,
Teacher in Syracuse, are not unique.
Fred Stone's career has been adventurous.
His army hitch during the First World War
Gave him the understanding teachers need.
During the recent war Stone served again
As head of a Red Cross unit abroad.

Such eager minds and hands which reach beyond
The borders of their own community
Broaden perspectives of those left at home;
For each, returning, pours enriching thought
Into the ever deepening local pool.

This refluence has not left barren flats;
As tides receding from a marshy shore
Are followed by fresh influx from the sea
So new vitality replaces old.
Many successful Port Byron doctors came
From other towns as Stewart and Hardy did,
Others, like Daniel Gilbert studied first
In the old Free School and Academy.
Unlike our "Uncle Dan" and Young Blauvelt,
Who recognize the needs of Port Byron folk,
Dickenson, Sedgwick Austin, Bertha Chase,
And many, many more practiced their skills
Of healing elsewhere. Most of these maintained
Strong ties with home, with relatives and friends
So that their talents could be put to use.
By home town folk whose ailments might require
The new procedures in which each excelled.

When young "Doc" Stone from Elbridge moved to town
He brought more than a new dental technique
And skillful work. His predecessor, Swift,
Had been unpopular, but Stone loved fun.
Athletics, music, and the M. E. Church
All knew upsurge of vitality

Through the activities of this young man.
In 1900 Dr. Stone inspired
John McEntee, the barber, Harry King,
Ed Blass and Gault to form a football team.
Husky, enthusiastic, coached by Stone,
This team invaded Weedsport one fall day; —
Results, disastrous to Francis Root,
Who, playing center, stood upon his head
With maybe twenty others in the pile. --
Doc. Gilbert to the rescue! All was well,
Though as a team Port Byron was overpowered
And football soon became unpopular;
But in the realm of music Dr. Stone
Exerts a strong and lasting influence.

In 1912 the young dentist became
Conductor of the "Auburn Civic Band" —
In those days "Salem Town Commandery."
The "Salem Town Band" was most popular
Throughout Cayuga County. Enlisting
With the National Guard, 3rd regiment,
The band gained fame after the border raids
That Villa made across the Texas line,
Not for such material music as inspires
The soldier. It played far too feelingly
The plaintive strains of Bishop's "Home Sweet Home".
The border crisis simmered, cooled and died
But troops, once mobilized did not disband
For German subs ranged across every sea
And undefended vessels were attacked.
War was declared. Men of the regiment
With wives and families were given discharge;
So Stone, Dorse Cummings and the rest, came home
While younger men like the two Crandall boys
Served under Pershing in the French campaigns
That held the Muse and smashed the German lines.
Bert Shotz, VanDitto, most of "Salem Town,"

Continued playing under Dr. Stone.
As younger men, like doctor's son, Eugene,
And Arthur Carr matured and joined the ranks
The Band improved. Through more than thirty years
Of changing personnel it has maintained
A reputation for fine music. From
The time when it succeeded Acre's Band
Up to the present, it has been a force
Uniting Auburn musicians with those
From the surrounding villages and towns.
But the internal unity that came
With Acre's Band and Vosburg's old quartet
Might have escaped but for the high school band.

Of old, Acres and Stone brought to Port Byron
Honors in music over many years.
Today young bloods like Peter VanDitto,
Whose daddy played with the old Salem Town,
And Tom Pulaski are musicians to watch.
Their training in the school band helped to build
Enthusiasm, for Jake Freeman has
The skill of the fine teacher and the touch
To make a youth with talent feel the worth
Of music as a means of livelihood
As well as the expression of the best
And deepest things that lie within his heart.
Before he turned to teaching Freeman played
Under the master, Sousa, in whose band
He learned perfectionism. His students,
Like Tommy, Pete, and Edwin Dougherty,
Their educations as yet incomplete,
Already have won honors for their arts —
And Freeman's Port Byron School Band has become
The largest group of young people to march
Under the name and to the honor of
Our village. Contests and triumphs have roused
New interest and enthusiasm for
All musical endeavor, and the school
Has won large prestige from the band's success.

PART XVI — Community Playground, World War I, Jazz, Migrants Again

The kindly spirit of the Reverend Crane
Who preached in Port Byron through the years of change
Had a large part in shaping ways of thought
And leaders who are prominent today.
He saw dependable electric light
Replace the flickering smoking oil
Reflected in the depths of the canal
Which still ran under the high Main Street bridge
Though hourly trolleys bound the village tight
To Auburn, Rochester and Syracuse.

This minister with understanding heart,
Abundant faith, and well considered words
Guided so many eager young people
Into the realization that each one
Must build his life with honesty and love
If he would serve his country, and himself.
His gift to us was the great gift of love,
Love of his Lord, and for his fellow men,
Love that inspired, and love that dared to work
Not only for his Presbyterians
But for a better understanding between all
The vying factions that divide a town.
His ardent work for the community
Coupled with that of loyal Mary Warren
And the enthusiastic Bumpusess,
Caldwell's, Bodine's and Chisholm's with the help
Of the good Father Cosgrove, brought about
The acquisition and construction of
The Green Street Playground.

There are many tales
Worthy of telling — How the boys and girls
Labored with pick, shovel, and wheel-barrow;
And the time Father Cosgrove asked a girl

In Alice Power's restaurant to pledge
The gift of any money she might "find"
To the playground, then "lost" a fat green bill:
How Fred Kick and a dozen farmers hauled
A load of gravel each to make the fill.
Lloyd Halsey, shouting with fierce emphasis,
His lack of interest in a baseball field.
Yet plowed and dragged the diamond after dark:
How Arthur Dixon helped erect the posts
To hold the backstop, even though his son
Was not yet big enough to make the team.

But that was later, the canal was dead.
Tow-boats had given place to power tugs,
And the new Barge Canal ran north of town
Leaving the Erie just an ugly scar
Marring the beauty of the quiet streets.
The Reverend Crane had watched his eldest son
And sons of his beloved parishioners
Strohmenger, Osburn, Glenn and Leslie Knapp,
Don khaki shirts and march away to war.
He prayed, and comforted, and wrote the boys,
And, when at last the anxious hours were past,
Offered thanksgiving in the village square.
Kindred in spirit was Miss Mary Warren,
Who stood on the tail board of Derby's truck,
A flag in either hand, tears in her eyes
And shouted, "Halleluiah, Thank Thee, Lord,"
At the first false report of ARMISTICE;
Then wept and prayed in greater thankfulness
When it was certain her boys would return.
But though there was rejoicing, many hearts
Were heavy, for Getman, Quinby, John Cooi,
And other local boys did not come home,
While some, like poor Claude Sawyer never could
Regain their health and live as normal men.
Only one man of all the ninety-six
Who went from Mentz brought home a foreign bride —

And what a stir among the younger set
At the square dance when Merritt DeBottis
Made the first entrance with his young French wife.
Whispers of, "Can she dance?" "What's the Frog like?"
"How old is she?" "Where did she get that dress?"
Though Fellow's music was not of the best
And mothers disapproved a "public dance"
That night at least the party was worth while
For the discovery that this French girl
Was timid, eager, friendly, like ourselves,
Was a real lesson in democracy.

The "Salem Town" and "Fellow's Fiddlers"
Were not the only instrumentalists
For "Doc" also had a dance orchestra
And the Orlando's, former show people,
Augmented income from the Park Hotel
By playing dances. Barbara, Louise,
Rose and their father formed the nucleus
Of one of the best "Jazz Bands" of the time.
Orlando, an accomplished violinist,
And the three girls he trained were versatile.
Able to play difficult concert works,
They played as fluently the hottest tune
Or sang a chorus of Saint Louis Blues.
While the young people laughed and kicked their heels
In Charleston rhythm, the mothers preferred
The dignity of waltzes played by Stone,
And Fellows called for Tuller and the Grange
At weekly dances in the movie house.

Nick Condees' movie never did succeed
But the building offered solution to
The lack of a gymnasium at school.
In 1920, '21 and '2
The high school students organized Port Byron.
Without the sponsorship of Mr. Stark,
Or the school board. They leased the theatre,

Hired Calkins as a coach, set for themselves
Scholastic standards players must attain.
Purchased equipment and made basket-ball
Financially successful -- for they played
To paid admissions from as many as
Three hundred adults at a Weedsport game.
The school was packed into the balcony
Whose pull-up stairway defied every law
Of fire protection. Port Byron High School won
A major portion of the contests played.

This business venture was experience
More valuable than algebra or French;
Unfortunately adults feared to trust
Young judgment so the faculty stepped in,
Enthusiasm died, attendance dropped,
And soon a deficit replaced the gain.
In 1923 the venture failed
And Guzzo's poolroom occupied the place,
Then it became a noisy skating rink.
At last the building fell into disuse
And disrepair. Earl Elliott bought it
For taxes. Today Emiel Martens has
This theatre and Newkirk's sales stable
Equipped to pack and ship his celery.
Strange changing cycle of a building's life
So like the lives of industries and men.

Today the Newkirk barn and theatre
Are symbols of a new and spreading trend
Which marks the passing years. When Martens came
He brought industrialized farming here;
Where Italians had drained the stubborn marsh,
Grubbed clear their fertile plots and tended them,
Martens imported negroes from the South
To plant and harvest mile long onion rows
And fields of celery that seem to reach

As far as the black muck land can be cleared.
He purchased trucks to haul his produce out
To New York markets. Now Rosemary Hearn,
As postmistress, sends money orders South
To dark-skinned families in Florida.
She combines the fulfillment of her oath
With courtesy, good humor, common sense
And kindness, so she is popular
With Port Byron residents, and migrants, too.

As influx of the first Irish was viewed
Askance by the established settlers
Along the Grand Canal; and, when they came,
Italians met a fierce hostility
So negro migrants of today are watched
With doubting eyes by citizens of longer residence,
And now established worth.
But those who can recall tempestuous days
Along the old canal, the rousterings,
The stabbings, and the robberies, who know
The barrenness and squalor of the life
Endured by new Italian citizens,
Should read the roster of school graduates
And business firms to be well reassured:-
For each new race has found a worthy place
In local life. Time, the great weaver, spins
Strands of new wool into soft glowing yarn,
Yarn that becomes a living tapestry
Telling the story of the days and years.

Unlike the immigrants of earlier times
The negroes have found food and living space
Provided. Though their camps are not true homes
The leadership of Reverend Hargrove helped
Them organize their own camp government,
And find the wholesomeness of sports and play.
Camp offers them group opportunity

For moral, social and religious growth,
And chance to win acceptance as a part
Of a progressive, tolerant Port Byron
Where negro citizens like barber Young,
And ball player, Zip Northrup, always have
Been accorded the honors and respect
Their industry and honesty deserved.

PART XVII — Group Life. School Days, Social Graces Then and New

Such threads of incident help to create
A pattern dominant through many years
As have such long lived movements as the Grange.
Organized in 1874.
Grange is a unifying influence
Showing the farmer more efficient ways
Of marketing and land development.
Grange lobbyists in Washington exert
Pressure on Congress to enact such laws
As benefit the men who till the land.
Though other farm co-operatives may add
Their influence as the Dairy League has done,
The Grange, less specialized, wider in scope,
Offers service all agriculture needs.
The County Agents who give farm folk help
In conservation and home problems
And the Home Bureau are projects which came
As a result of the demands first made
On legislature by the Grange spokesmen.

The Alumni Association of the school
Was organized the same year as the Grange.
Although it is a purely social club
Its influence has made a better town
Because leaders of yesterday return
To share both pranks and deep experience
With graduates who see tomorrow's sun

Golden with promise. Such meetings help weld
Links of the past with problems of today—
And to the future which is nurtured in
The spirit and traditions of such schools.

Alumni effort has provided funds
For the "Edson L. Moore Memorial",
The Mary Warren and Vera Fenn award.

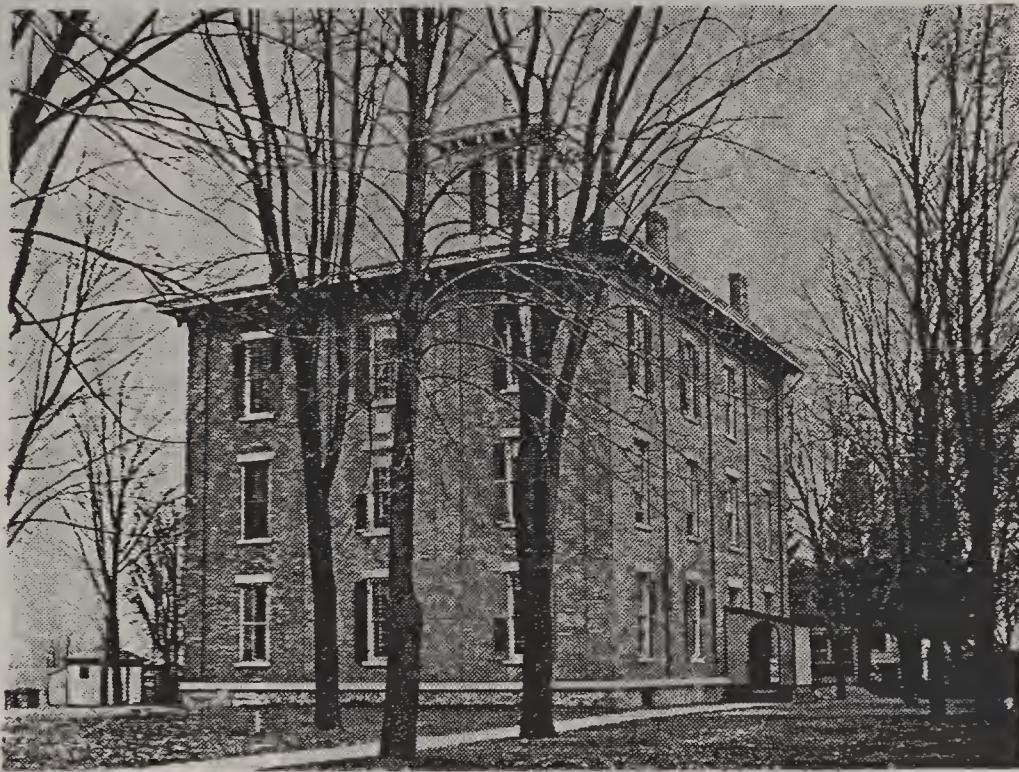


Pageant, June 1922 -- Spirit of '76
Front row (left to right): Richard Russel, Edward Seymour,
Arthur Carr; Back row: Ervin Davis, John Holmes,
Ray Davis, Arthur Tuller

Clara Barrus and Grace Austin Powell,
Old graduates, have written fluently
On local lore. In 1922
The fiftieth commencement for Port Byron
Was a huge home coming, pageant and feast,
Sponsored by the Alumni of the school.

The banquet, served by Auburn caterers
Packed the main floor, dais and balcony
Of Federated Church with graduates
Come back to sing "The Orange and The Black"
And tell of escapades which memory draped
In romance and excitement far beyond
Prosaic happenings of present times.

The pageant, written by Grace Austin Powell,
Recalled the early history of the town
In drills and dances. Carefree high school girls,
Adorned with fluttering scarfs of red or gray,
Were flames, and smoke, and ashes of the fire
Which burned the Free School and Academy.



Old Free School and Academy
Destroyed by Fire in 1898

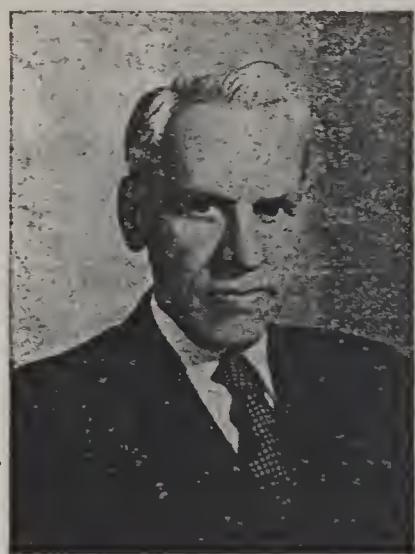


December 24, 1936
"That Port Byron High School too would feed red flames."

How little those gay dancers ever thought
That Port Byron High School, too, would feed red flames,
That black charred joists and broken bricks would be
The remnants of the building they had loved
And criticized, and played and studied in.
How could they know that from its smoking ash
Professor Gates and his supporters would
Create the model central school which stands
Astride the old canal and trolley tracks,
Dwarfing past structures as its program dwarfs
That offered under Fuller, Morehouse, Moore,
Or even Mr. Gates in '22.

The class of '22 was "Prof's" first class.
And what a class! Meet Francis Perry Chisholm,
Writer, lecturer, and college teacher;
And Bernice Campbell Carr whose children have

Grown up and graduated under Gates.
Then Lila Carr and "Gen" Jones Dougherty
Today are teachers in the Central School,
Know Louis Hamilton, a prison guard,
And his wife, Alma who for years
Kept Thomas Crane's store and insurance books.
Earl Clark, a banker, Henry Mecomber,
Customs inspector, Marjorie Jacobs Banks
And Ethel Ray:- to finish out the list
Mátt Dougherty, the trucker, and myself.
No wonder Arthur Gates has hair turned gray
If later classes were head-strong as we.



Prof. Arthur A. Gates
Principal from 1921

From other classes graduates have gone
Into the priesthood as O'Connor did.
He studied Latin prose with Mary Warren
In the old Free School and Academy,
While younger graduates like Frederick Crane
Learned Latin, loyalty and sportsmanship
In Port Byron High School under Stark and Gates,

And took their ideals with them into life.
Fred was taught faith and godliness at home
By the example that his father set;
But living in a parish house was not
Pre-requisite to the religious life
For Harry King became a minister;
Two of "Jim" Hearn's three sons renounced the world
And studied the strict tenets of their faith
While Dr. Elmer McNamara knelt,
As did his brother, Joseph, to assume
The robes of priesthood in the Roman Church.
Returning, doctors, lawyers, teachers, priests
Bring home the inspiration of their worlds
And find their own souls strengthened and refreshed
By contact with the old familiar place
And people they once knew as "Stan" or "Bill."

The art of public speech and of debate
Was once important, for town meetings gave
Americans an opportunity
For eloquent expression. Most believed
That any village magistrate could be
A party leader, or the president:-
And small towns did produce important men
Like Seward from Auburn. In the town of Mentz
The abolition movement fed the fires
Of oratory and such local names
As King and Higley attained prominence
In state elections and the caucuses
Where party policies originate.
Even where no high office was involved
Forensic talent gathered to debate
Such issues as the radical belief
That women were entitled to the vote.
The S. D. C., Student's Debating Club,
Agreed to that in 1884
Some 50 years before the suffrage law.

In later days this art was kept alive
Through school and county contests in debate
And declamation. In his high school days
Fred Crane competed for honors against
The social worker, Marjory Jacobs Banks,
Whose father, Frank Jacobs, was a member
Of the old S. D. C. Though Jacobs chose
To graduate from Weedsport, not Port Byron,
The Jacobs home and farm were located
Nearer Port Byron and his interests were
Bound tightly to this village. Ralhaella
His granddaughter, attends the local school
To which her mother grandfather, and great-
Grandsire were loyal, learning, as they learned,
The fundamentals for successful life.



Port Byron Central School

The physical appearance of the school
And school equipment certainly has changed
Since days of the old Free Academy
Attended by Frank Jacobs and John Ames:-

Though Jacobs lived to see the Central School
Other grandparents hardly could conceive
The fine gymnasium, home-making rooms,
And courses like the one which Mrs. Gates
Has created to teach the high school boys
And girls behavior for the banquet hall
Or to be gracious hosts in their own homes.
The children of today are unabashed
Because the proper social usages
And actions are familiar through the teas
Dinners and parties sponsored by this class.

In older days the church, to some extent,
Offered such training. It was Epworth League
That sponsored trips across the continent
For young folks like Lou Davis and Flo Root.
A trip to California gave these two
A chance to travel and be entertained.
In Salt Lake City Brigham Young's first wife,
Whom he had married at the time he lived
In Haydenville, saw the familiar name
"Port Byron, New York." This ancient lady gave
The girls a gracious welcome to the home
Where nine of Brigham's widows still survived.
Since then two generations have slipped by;
The girls of 1890 have grown old
But what was true of them may well befall
Young moderns who perpetuate the names
Of Knapp, DeBottis, Reeves and Dougherty
For the gay spirit of adventure lives
And the whole world is closer to their doors
Than Utah was fifty odd years ago.

PART XVIII — Port Byron Vs. Weedsport, World Wars I & II

No story of Port Byron would be complete
Without the tale of rivalry between
This town and Weedsport. These villages became
Competitors before the first canal.
Each offered travelers a good route north,
And both made bids for Auburn's early trade,
Each drew its truest wealth from fertile farms
And shipped its plenty through the Grand Canal.
But rivalry was not confined to trade,
Village improvements, schools, hotels, and shops,
Were looked upon in praise or ridicule
As they were more or less pretentious than
Those Weedsport could display to visitors.
It was no accident when sports began,
That the successful seasons were the ones
In which the Weedsport teams suffered defeat.
The games have changed from frontier feats of strength,
Log chopping, marksmanship, and wrestling,
But not the spirit. When baseball was born
Young men from both towns played it eagerly.
In the gay '90's Blakeman, Dickey, Warren,
Were popular among the girls because
Their names were linked with Port Byron victories:
Then Franklin Burke, Bob Beach, the Henry boys,
Were heroes to the crowd when Ethel Ray
And Elsie Goss attended Port Byron High.
Bob Dixon, "Spitty" Kincaid, Caveney, Clark,
Really there are no gaps, new teams are born
Each one as eager and as well beloved
As was the first. Elders remember balls
Slugged by Guy Parsons or Lorenzo Ames
While Janie Elliott would praise the play
Don Northrup made at Weedsport just last spring.
At times the rivalry has been intense
Tempers have flared, but usually the games

Are played in spirit of good fellowship.
The spirit which permitted local teams
To play school basketball on Weedsport courts
When Port Byron High had no gymnasium;
And which, today, allows for the exchange
Of "Ag" and Spanish teachers. The schools work
Together for a better rural life.
Though many of the one time athletes,
Grown older and more serious with years,
Have won their victories and lived their lives
Far from Port Byron, men who have stayed at home
Have enriched both their neighbors and themselves.
Farmers like Mills, Carr, Forbes and Denman may
Not have their names recorded in "Who's Who,"
But through the generations they have been
A unifying force in village life.

Port Byron has changed greatly since Richard King,
Direct descendant of old Philip King,
Returned from service in the First World War,
Studied awhile, and, when his father died,
Succeeded talented Lasuvious
As a key man in county politics.
He edited the Port Byron Chronicle,
But interests wax and wane so Dick became
Tester of weights and measures. Other men
Who fought in 1918 assumed roles
In Port Byron life just as their fathers had
After the earlier wars. While some moved on
As Topliffe, Knapp, DeBottis and "Les" Blake
To earn distinction in their chosen fields,
"Frank" Burke stayed here; and Allen Ames retained
His army rank. He served through the last war
With the same energy and skill he showed
In younger days; and with him served the sons
Of Bush, Rusch, Parsons, Blake and Dougherty.
These boys of the Air Corps, Navy, Marines

And slogging infantry went everywhere.
Some served in Africa, young Bobby Ware
Was stationed in Alaska where, they say,
Our weather's born; and Thomas Corey saw
The tropic island where his nephew died.
But it is better that Fred Sponable
Should be remembered as the smiling lad
Whose air-rifle could bring a pheasant down,
And Robert Blauvelt, not as lost at sea,
But as a member of the happy throng
Diving and swimming at Stop 69:-
Sometimes Glenn Pultz and Helmer joined the sport
But always Theda Streeter, Carol Warren,
Jack Caldwell, Wiley, and Kincaid were there
To share the spring-board or watch the eclipse
Through exposed film and marvel at the sight..

The Rev. Lusk, who could not swim, would come
To wade and carelessly go striding off
Into brown water far beyond his depth
Completely sure Rozelle Fitzgerald would
Dive in and haul his sputtering reverence out;
And Carrie Belle would lecture him again
On taking foolish chances with a life
Designed for service:- And how well he served!
First with the C. C. boys, then in the war,
And now in a civilian church once more.

Paul Moore, whose hair will never thin or grey,
Will always be a slender wiry lad
Who liked his golf and tennis, and his horn!
Young Ernest Stoneberg goes about his chores
Striding between the rows of tasseled corn,
Or sharing the warm friendliness of home.
For Robert Jetty, one of "Hunk's" six sons
Who answered reveille, the taps were blown;
Still the back pew of Federated Church

Where the six Jetty boys so often sat
To hear Lusk preach is always occupied
By a serious, big-eyed boy of twelve,
Happy in school and church and family life.
All these young men we knew can only die
When our hearts cease to love. Medals were won!
Of course, for Port Byron people have a code
Of family honor and deep loyalty
To things American. The record shows
In the early campaigns of Washington,
The War of 1812, The Civil War,
In '98, against the Villa Raids,
And in the two great wars to end all wars,
That Port Byron men were strong, loyal and brave.

The Port Byron women, worthy of their men,
Assumed new duties. Flora Wilson wore
An Army uniform and Port Byron girls
Served in the Navy, Air Corps, and Red Cross,
While others, like their grandmothers, took up
Tasks dropped by men when angry cannon roared.
For women who wait eagerly for news
Of son or husband there is little more
Than work and prayer on which to build a life
So Mrs. Rude, Maude Ames, and Mary France,
Saphrona, Marge Wiley, Mable Clarke,
And all the rest were busy. Stores and shops
Were staffed by wives and mothers. "V-mail" sped
The newsy letters that are meat and drink
Across two oceans and five continents
To waiting Port Byron men more swiftly than
A message could be sent to Gettysburg
In 1863 when Warren fought there.

But as the horrors of the '60's passed
And men returned to village and to farm,
The war of planes and speeding P.T. Boats

Of bulldozers and flame throwers was done
And there was singing in the streets again,
And celebration, and a home-coming.
And pageant. -- But there still are empty hearts
And hearths upon which Yule logs do not flame.

— EPILOGUE —

The flying shuttles leap from strand to strand
Weaving a rich and wonderful design
In which the figures, as yet incomplete
Are forming. — New gigantic tasks
Are waiting these young men who fought so well,
And for their sons and grandsons who, in turn,
Shall move across the growing tapestry.
It seems that there can never be an end.
The fabric rolls more swiftly from the loom;
The intricately woven patterns stir
To life. Although our day is done,
Though faded colors of the past may blend
And interchange, though figures building now
Seem harsh and crude, their colors new and raw,
All these will soften into harmony
And merge into the unity which is
Our past, our present, and good years to come.

(Offered with reverence for the generations past, with love
for men and women of today and with a sincere hope for a
tomorrow which will outshine all the yesterdays.

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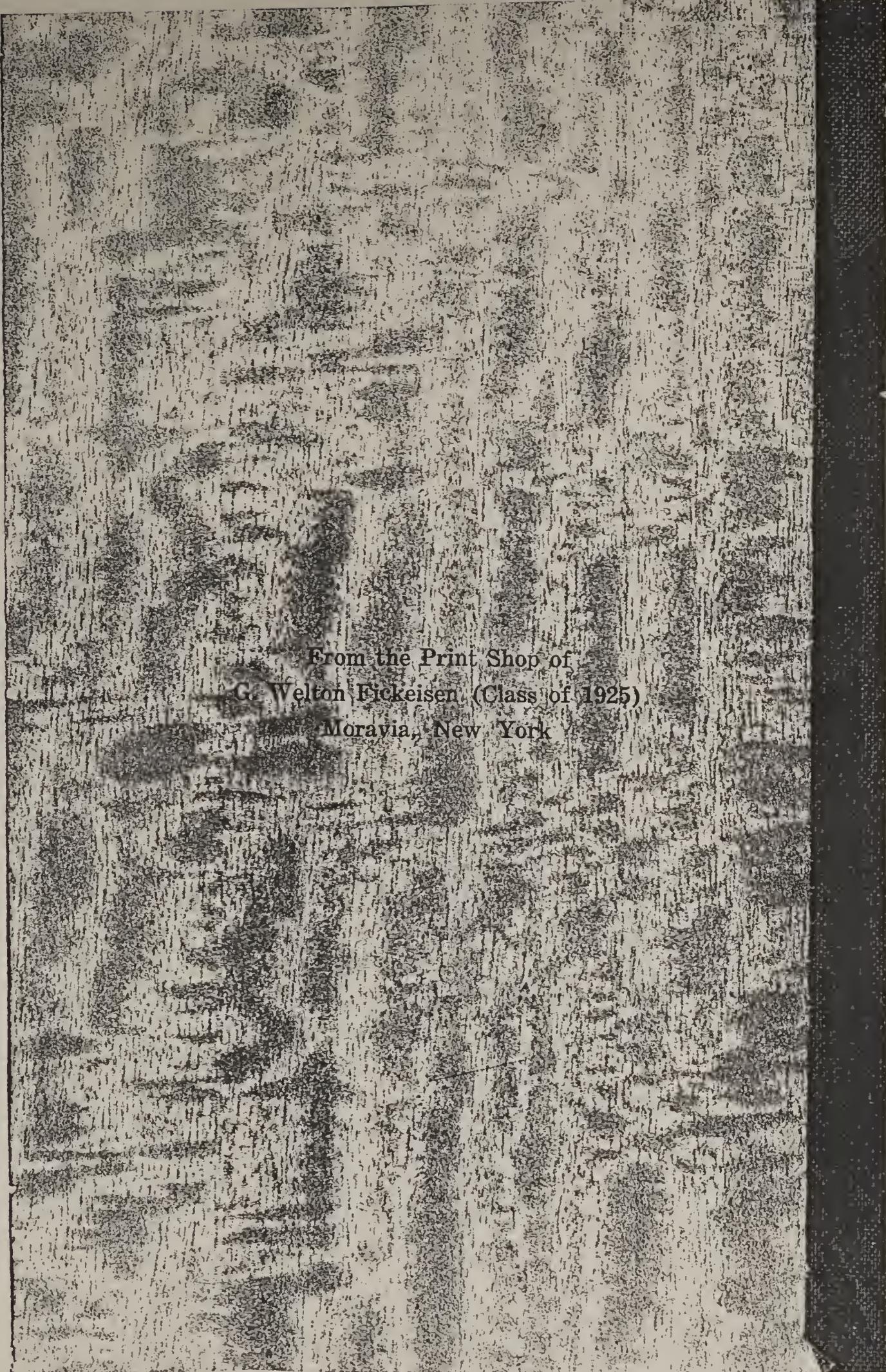
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NOTE

The Index has been ably arranged by Miss Gladys Jacobs.

Limitations of time and space prevented inclusion of the last signature of the book in this index, but the Index will be found of great value in tracing the early history of the community.

Some of the illustrations are very old and not of good printing quality, but their historic interest is apparent.



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